

QUEENSLAND PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

PROOF 22ND NOVEMBER 1917

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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

THIRD SESSION OF THE TWENTIETH PARLIAMENT, 1917.

Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly.

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ABBREVIATIONS.—1^o, 2^o, 3^o, first, second, third readings; Com., Committee; M., motion; Ry., railway; Amd., Amendment; Apr. pls., approval, plans, &c.; Sel. Com., Referred to Sel. Com.; Rep. Sel. Com., Report of Sel. Com.; Mes. Cl., Message from Legislative Council.

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STANDING ORDERS.—The President, Mr. Brentnall, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Leahy, Mr. Hall, and Mr. Whittingham.

ELECTIONS TRIBUNAL.

ELECTIONS JUDGE.—His Honour Mr. Justice Real.

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ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES.

STANDING ORDERS.—The Speaker, The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Tolmie, Mr. Macartney,
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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

THURSDAY, 22 NOVEMBER, 1917.

The PRESIDENT (Hon. W. Hamilton) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

QUESTIONS.

NEGOTIATIONS FOR TRANSFER OF BAUPLE CENTRAL SUGAR-MILL.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES asked the Secretary for Mines—

"1. Have they negotiated for the transfer of the Bauple Sugar-mill?

"2. If so, are such negotiations concluded?

"3. To what locality is it intended to transfer such mill?

"4. When will such transfer take place?"

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones) replied—

"1. No.

"2, 3, and 4. See answer to No. 1."

USE OF PETREE PROCESS IN GOVERNMENT CENTRAL SUGAR-MILLS.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES asked the Secretary for Mines—

"Will he lay upon the table of the Council the agreement and the correspondence (if any) relating to the purchase of certain patent rights, known as the Petree process, to be used in Government central sugar-mills?"

The SECRETARY FOR MINES replied—

"I now lay on the table a copy of the agreement in connection with the Petree process, and a copy of the memorandum of the General Manager of Government Central Sugar-mills recommending the purchase of the process."

REFERENDUM ON ABOLITION OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

HON. F. T. BRETNALL: I would like to take this opportunity of referring to a question that I asked the Minister five weeks ago. The hon. gentleman politely informed me then that the information asked for would take some considerable time to prepare, but he hoped that by the end of the second week from that time he would be able to supply the information. As I say, five weeks have since elapsed and I have not yet received an answer to my question. I intimated to the Minister yesterday that I would bring the question on to-day, or that I was prepared to bring it on, and he intimated to me that he would probably be prepared to give the information to-day. I now repeat the question and ask the hon. gentleman—

"With regard to the referendum taken on 5th May, 1917, concerning the abolition of the Legislative Council—

"1. What is the total cost to the State of such referendum?

"2. What is the respective cost under the headings—(a) printing; (b) advertising; (c) halls; (d) telegrams; (e) returning officers and scrutineers; (f) legal expenses to date?

"3. What was the total number of electors on the roll (male and female) at that date?

"4. What was the total number who voted (male and female)?

"5. What was the number and result (as far as can be ascertained) of the absent soldiers' votes on such referendum?"

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I would like to be allowed to explain matters. When the Hon. Mr. Brentnall asked the question before, I was Acting Home Secretary. I was informed by the Under Secretary that it would take at least three weeks to get all the information that the hon. gentleman required.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: It has taken five weeks.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The hon. gentleman might give me the opportunity of explaining. I do not think the Hon. Mr. Brentnall will accuse me of having any desire to withhold the information from him.

HON. F. T. BRETNALL: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: A day or two afterwards I passed a note to the hon. gentleman over the table requesting him not to press for the answer to a certain part of his question, because it would necessitate a great deal of work; but, if he particularly desired the information and considered it very necessary that the House should get it, I would ask the department to prepare that information. The hon. gentleman informed me that he particularly wished to get the information, and I conveyed that intimation to the Home Department. Yesterday afternoon I had a communication sent to the Under Secretary by telephone on the subject. The information is not here to-day, and I would ask the hon. member to repeat the question on Tuesday next, by which time I hope to have the full information.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CLOSER SETTLEMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

MOTION FOR THIRD READING—ORDER POSTPONED.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I beg to move—That the Bill be now read a third time.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I find that the title of the Bill does not by any means properly describe the contents of the measure. It is entitled "A Bill to amend the Closer Settlement Acts, 1906-1913, in certain particulars," but it also amends the Land Act Amendment Act of 1916, and I do not want it to be in any way vitiated by a defect in the title. I understand the more appropriate place to bring the matter up would be on the motion for fixing the title.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I am not prepared to deal with the point raised by the hon. member off-hand, and, with a view to giving me an opportunity of looking into the matter, I ask leave to withdraw the motion for the third reading of the Bill.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

The third reading was made an Order of the Day for the next sitting day.

Hon. A. J. Jones.]

PUBLIC WORKS LAND RESUMPTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

FIRST READING.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR MINES, this Bill, received by message from the Assembly, was read a first time.

The second reading was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES ACTS AMEND- MENT BILL.

FIRST READING.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR MINES, this Bill, received by message from the Assembly, was read a first time.

The second reading was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

STATE CHILDREN ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

FIRST READING.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR MINES, this Bill, received by message from the Assembly, was read a first time.

ORDER FOR SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I beg to move—That the second reading of the Bill stand an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: I think this is the third Bill we have had brought before us this afternoon. The Minister told us last night that he expects to close the session next week. We have on the programme now ten Bills, and those introduced to-day will make thirteen. How many more Bills does the Minister intend to rush before us next week?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: If the hon. gentleman peruses the business-sheet of the Legislative Assembly, he will see that there are not many more Bills to come up to the Council. All the Bills introduced this afternoon are non-contentious, and should pass through the House with very little discussion.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Are the Bills yet to come non-contentious?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Yes, I think so. I think the Local Authorities Bill is a Bill of only two clauses, and I am sure every hon. member agrees with the provisions of the State Children Act Amendment Bill.

Question put and passed

DAYS OF SITTING.

FRIDAY SITTINGS—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

On the Order of the Day being read for the resumption of the adjourned debate on the Hon. A. J. Jones's motion—

“That, unless otherwise ordered, the Council will meet for the despatch of business at 3 o'clock p.m. on Friday in each week, in addition to the days already provided for by Sessional Order, and that Government business do take precedence of all other business on that day,”

HON. T. M. HALL said: As I took some [Hon. A. J. Jones.

part in the matter of fixing the time for the resumption of the debate on this motion, I rise to say that I am desirous of facilitating the transaction of business as far as possible, in view of the approaching close of the session. I assume that the Minister will adjourn at a reasonable hour on Friday night, as a number of members, on his own side as well as on this, are anxious to catch their train for the North on that night. At the same time, I think this motion should be moved from time to time, and that it should not be made to apply to half a dozen Fridays in succession. I am sure that all of us on this side of the House are prepared to meet the Minister and to facilitate business, and, if the hon. gentleman agrees to adjourn early on Friday night, I presume there will be no opposition to the motion.

HON. W. STEPHENS: I should like to know whether the Minister is prepared to alter the motion in the way the Hon. Mr. Hall suggests.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The hon. gentleman has already spoken on the motion.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It appears to me that hon. gentlemen prefer to trust me only from week to week.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: That is not it exactly.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: However, I am very pleased at the manner in which the Hon. Mr. Hall has spoken on this question, and, if hon. gentlemen are willing to trust me, I am willing to trust them, and withdraw the motion altogether.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: If you do that we shall not be able to sit to-morrow.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I understand that we can sit on Friday by adjourning till Friday. I will be quite candid with the House, and say that it is the intention of the Government to close the session on Friday next week.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Whether they get Supply or not?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is a matter for this House. I had intended to ask the House to sit on Monday.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: One full week's work would not harm hon. gentlemen very much. However, I will amend the motion as suggested, and with that object in view, with the leave of the House, I will withdraw the motion now before the Council.

The PRESIDENT: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion be withdrawn?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I move—

“That the Council, at its rising, adjourn until 3 o'clock to-morrow.”

Question put and passed.

REGULATION OF SUGAR CANE PRICES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

POSTPONEMENT OF ORDER FOR CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I understand that it is the wish of the House

that this Order should be postponed to enable certain amendments to be printed and distributed among hon. members.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: For how long?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Until a later hour of this sitting. I wish to study the convenience of hon. members, and hon. members may not be prepared to go on with the second reading of the State Iron and Steel Works Bill, which is the next Order of the Day.

Hon. B. FAHEY: I have not made a note even on the State Iron and Steel Works Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I understand that the amendments in connection with the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act Amendment Bill will be here shortly.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: We can wait half an hour.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: In that case, I move that Order of the Day No. 3 be postponed until after the consideration of Order No. 4.

Question put and passed.

STATE IRON AND STEEL WORKS BILL.

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Hon. T. M. HALL: We have had a very interesting and instructive address from the Minister in connection with this measure, and also from the Hon. Mr. Fowles and the Hon. Mr. Bedford. Therefore, it does not need any further amplification.

[4 p.m.] so far as the actual business of establishing iron and steel works is concerned, from me. I certainly commend the Minister, and also his predecessor in the Mines Department, for making some effort in the direction of developing the minerals beneath the soil of this State. (Hear, hear!) Queensland is essentially a State of production from the surface of the land, and is capable of immense enlargement and improvement in the matter of winning minerals at a low depth. What has affected the progress of Queensland in this respect has been the number of adventurers who started to exploit the minerals of this State with insufficient capital, with overvalued values and paid-up interests, and big institutions to start with, but by the time they came to do the practical work of unearthing the minerals, then, what ought to have been a successful venture, generally became a failure. If Queensland is going to become what we anticipate and hope it may be, one of the greatest producing countries in the world, the Government will require to give particular attention to its primary industries. We have already established in this State primary industries on the surface of the land to an extent which has proved its power at the present time, because Queensland has been able to export very large quantities of the products of the soil, in addition to supplying her own requirements. In the minerals of the State we have got evidence of the existence of untold wealth, and it only needs to be handled by some person who understands the business of unearthing minerals to make it a success. We should offer every inducement to those who are anxious to do so.

At the present time facilities are afforded for conveying some of the produce of the land to market at a reasonable rate, but I find in connection with minerals that something in the nature of an embargo is placed on goods that are carried by our railways, both for the smelting, and in connection with the minerals removed from the mine. I am sure that the Minister is considering this matter, and that the time will come when every facility will be given to those endeavouring to produce metals which are of paramount importance to-day, and which will continue to be of paramount importance for years after the war has ended. The Government might well pay some attention to the exorbitant prices now placed on the development of the mining industry. I recently had occasion to make inquiries about the cost of coke for the working of a mine which is now lying idle. The smelters have been lying idle for some considerable time. When I was making inquiries about the price of coke, I was informed that it would cost £1 5s. per ton; but it would cost another £2 5s. per ton to rail it to the mine I refer to, and with an additional 5s. per ton for other incidentals that made an extra cost of £2 10s. per ton. I made further inquiries at the Railway Department as to the cost of transmitting the matte containing 35 per cent. of copper to Mount Morgan, and I was told that it would cost £2 12s. per ton. If we are going to make a success of our primary industries in Queensland we must have the assistance of the Railway Department to do so. We have an illustration in Canada to show how that country assists men who settle on the land, and gives them every inducement and every facility for carrying on production, and having their goods removed at the lowest possible cost. During the time when Canada was being opened up, every facility was afforded for men on the land to get everything in the cheapest possible way. The result was that they were able to make a success right from the start. Something of the same kind ought to apply in Queensland with regard to our minerals. I am deeply sympathetic with the Minister, and also with his predecessor at the Mines Department, for the work they have done in that department. I think the present Minister has done more to assist the mining industry in Queensland than any Minister for Mines who occupied that position before. (Hear, hear!) If the Government are going to embark on an enterprise of this kind, they want to see that before they build expensive works that they are able to produce the metal they require. We have had a considerable discussion from that point of view from the Minister for Mines, and from the Hon. Messrs. Fowles and Bedford. That part of it I take it will have to be carefully organised, and carefully investigated, before the country is involved in a very large expenditure. So far as I am personally concerned, I am prepared to give my fullest sympathy and assistance to the Minister in embarking upon an industry which should develop the country in such a way as to attract to this State, not only capital from America and other parts of the world, but labour and people from the greatly disturbed centres of Europe and Great Britain and her dependencies. If we establish this industry on right lines we will encourage people to come here, and we will have an accession of men who have had experience in other places, and they would

Hon. T. M. Hall.

be able to develop what was previously badly handled in Queensland. There is only one point on which I feel sorry for the Minister, and that is that this Bill is loaded up with a lot of other conditions which will only hamper the passing of the measure, unless they are eliminated. Every wise man, when he enters upon an important enterprise of this kind, carefully calculates all the circumstances, and carefully tests the undertaking before he embarks upon a large expenditure. When a ship is about to be built a model is made first. When some other article of utility is designed it is put in model form first, and then it is worked out on proper lines, to see what it is capable of doing, and what it is proposed to do. With regard to the establishment of iron works, the Minister must realise that before embarking upon an expenditure of £500,000 or £1,000,000 that some preliminary work should be undertaken. I consider that it will require probably £50,000 or £60,000, or perhaps more, for the preliminary work, and the Minister would be well advised if he gets assistance to that extent in carrying out the preliminary part of the business. To this extent I am prepared to support him in every way. The possibility of producing iron and other metals in Queensland has already been established. As I said before, any wise man entering on a large enterprise goes steadily at the beginning, and lays his foundations soundly, and then proceeds to build up his structure on that foundation. So far as this Bill is concerned, with the exception, perhaps, of some of the facilities which are asked for as to wharves and shipping, and other things that are brought within its purview, I think the Bill is very reasonable, and it is one that I think the Government are the people who should undertake it in the absence of private enterprise. The Government should take it up vigorously, and lead the way in developing the resources of the country, both as regards the production of minerals and in other respects. We know that we have very valuable deposits of iron in Queensland at the present time, in fact, we have all the metals that are known to commerce, and if the Government succeed in establishing iron works here that will produce saleable and marketable goods, then they will have done valuable work for Queensland. They will show to the world what we have got in Queensland, and it will direct attention from those who may perhaps be desirous of exploiting some of those great deposits that we have here. I am thoroughly in favour of the Bill, with the exception that I think, before giving the Government the powers they ask for in the way of taking over shipping and wharves and such like things, they should be given a fair show to establish the works first. If it is found as time goes on that the other facilities are required, they can be asked for. At any rate, so far as the establishment of iron works is concerned, the Minister can proceed, and we will grant him all the facilities asked for in this Bill.

Hon. T. NEVITT: The production of pig iron is the primary object.

Hon. T. M. HALL: I understand that that is so. That can be embraced in the suggestion that a certain sum of money should be set aside to give the Minister an opportunity of testing the question thoroughly. If he finds he is capable of making it a commercial venture, he will

have done his duty. There is no doubt that this House will grant him all the money he requires to make it a success, and furnish him with all the implements, shipping, and everything else necessary in connection with it. The question has never been handled as it should have been in the past by previous Ministers. The present Minister is to be highly commended for the attention he has given to the matter, and though he might find that the wheels of progress are clogged somewhat by some of the clauses that are inserted in this Bill, at least I can say that I for one am prepared to give him the fullest possible assistance to expose some of the hidden wealth of Australia in general, and Queensland in particular, to the world, and let them see what we have here. Even if it costs £100,000 to do that, if it demonstrates to the world the immense richness of the mineral deposits we have in Queensland, then it will be money well spent. (Hear, hear!)

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: I am in favour of the second reading of this Bill, but I go a very great way with what the Hon. Mr. Hall has said with respect to the inadvisability of giving the Government unlimited power to spend money on what is practically an undeveloped industry. I agree with the hon. gentleman that we should restrict the present grant, say, to £50,000 or £100,000, which would give the Government plenty of money to establish, at any rate, the pig iron industry and develop what is at present a new industry so far as this State is concerned. We know from the reports of our geologists at different times that there is apparently a very large amount of iron ore in Queensland. The Minister appears to intend to restrict operations for the present to opening up the Biggenden lodes. Now, Biggenden, to a very great extent, is undeveloped, and we can only estimate what quantity of ore is there. We are told that it is very rich ore—I think 65 per cent. is about the average. But we know that there are other large deposits. For instance, at Mount Leviathan, in the Cloncurry district, it was estimated by Dr. Jack that there are 10,500,000 tons of ore. Then, Mount Pisa, which is situated about 2 miles from Mount Leviathan, is estimated to contain 1,000,000 tons of ore. No estimate has been made of the quantity of ore at Kangaroo Hills, but apparently it is a very rich lode. Iron Island is estimated to contain 2,250,000 tons. That is at present being worked by the Mount Morgan Company. There is, no doubt, a very great amount of exploration yet to be carried out. It is a matter for consideration where the proposed iron and steel works shall be established. I think that the Government should be restricted under this Bill entirely to iron and steel works. Some years ago, when I was in the Ministry, we had a proposition submitted to us to utilise the water of the Barron Falls as a source of hydro-electric power for very large works, and I was in hopes that the scheme would come to something. Unfortunately, something happened, and the scheme fell through; but I have always had the idea that that should be the locality where we should establish smelting and other works of the kind, because there is no question that, if you can use water power, you can do with one-third of the amount of coke that is required where water power is concerned. Hydro-electric works are the coming scheme throughout the world. They are be-

[Hon. T. M. Hall.]

coming very general in Norway and Sweden. I think, in Sweden, about seventy hydro-electric plants are at work. In Tasmania they have lately harnessed up the falls at Lake St. Clair, and they have also established hydro-electric works in Hobart, which are doing a great deal in the way of smelting for mines in Tasmania as well as for mines on the mainland. What impresses me particularly in connection with this matter is that we must be very careful that we do not embark on the enterprise on too extensive a scale. The Broken Hill Proprietary Company have spent at least £2,000,000 in their works at Newcastle, and I believe they are going either to duplicate those works or, at any rate, very largely extend them, with the result that they will probably spend £3,000,000 or £4,000,000, which will enable them to turn out very large quantities of iron and steel. There are also the Eskbank iron works at Lithgow, in New South Wales, which are also on a very large scale. I have no recent information as to the output of these two works, but "Knibbs" for 1915, at page 420, says—

"New South Wales.—Reference to the extent of the deposits of iron ore in the State, and the events leading up to the establishment of iron works at Lithgow, will be found in earlier issues of the Year Book (see No. III., page 508). During 1914 the following materials were received at the blast furnace at the Eskbank iron works, Lithgow:—Iron ore, 135,316 tons; limestone, 45,938 tons; and coke, 97,224 tons. The output was 75,150 tons of pig iron, and 24,420 tons of steel ingots.

"The Broken Hill Proprietary Company has established works for the manufacture of iron and steel on a large scale at Newcastle, and operations were started early in 1915. The company is utilising the immense deposit of iron ore at the Iron Knob quarries in South Australia; abundant stores of first quality coal can be obtained from the various coalfields in the vicinity of Newcastle, and arrangements have been made for the local supply of the necessary quantities of limestone. The works have been planned so as to allow of ready extension as the business develops. By the end of August, 1915, the works had produced 36,214 tons of pig iron, from which were made 17,134 tons of billets and blooms, and 11,574 tons of rails. The company has contracts for over 100,000 tons of steel rails in Australia. Provision has been made for increasing the originally calculated output from 125,000 tons to 170,000 tons of steel per annum."

Those two works will be able to overtake very largely the consumption of Australia, and the question arises—and it has been considered before to-day—whether there is room for another large establishment in Australia. The Iron Bonus Commission took evidence in 1903 from the manager of Mort's Dock and Engineering Company in Sydney, and he said that there was no room at that time for more than one iron and steel works in Australia.

HON. T. NEVITT: It all depends on the output.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: That is so. We have had a very optimistic speech from the Hon. Mr. Bedford, who speaks with a great deal of authority on the subject. I

hope his optimism will be justified by events, because I would certainly like to see iron works started in Queensland on a large scale, though I also believe that at first we ought to go slow and feel our way. But, with the two large works already operating in Australia, it is very questionable whether we shall be justified in expending £1,000,000 in establishing the industry in Queensland. The Minister has estimated that £550,000 will be required, but he has really no basis for that except the estimate of Mr. Darby, the Blythe River engineer, who estimated that works at Blythe River would cost £1,000,000. The Secretary for Mines has omitted his estimate for steamers, as they would not be wanted here, and he is of opinion that a commencement could be made by the expenditure of the amount I have just stated. But we must remember that that estimate was made at least fifteen years ago, and that the price of all materials has gone up considerably since then. It is therefore probable that it would cost fully £1,000,000 to start works here now. I do not wish in any way to put a damper on the thing. I would like to see iron works started, but I think we should provide adequate safeguards, and that we should limit the expenditure to 30th June next to £100,000. Mr. Sandford, of the Eskbank works at Lithgow, estimated that £100,000 would be sufficient to start pig iron works satisfactorily, and I think that that amount should be sufficient for this year. I think the Bill should also be hedged round so that the undertaking will not be subject to political control, because the whole success of the works will depend entirely on the management. We want a manager who will have unrestricted power, and a man who will know what he is about. He should be a man of undoubted ability and experience as a civil engineer, but, above all, he must be absolutely free from political control. I think that we should make provision for a commission to control the expenditure, such commission to consist of an engineer as chairman—who should have at least ten years' experience in civil engineering—the Commissioner for Railways—who would be largely interested in the consumption of rails—and a third good man, whoever he might be. We would thereby safeguard the interests of the taxpayers, and would, as far as possible, ensure the starting and carrying on of the works on a proper footing. With those safeguards and with the limitation of the powers of the Government that I have alluded to, I think the Bill will be a very good one. I would like to see iron works started on a proper footing, but we have first to ascertain where the ore is to come from, then where the works should be situated; and, as I have already said, I think they ought to be situated at Cairns or somewhere in that locality, because there is a tremendous area of rich mineral country all round Cairns. Manganese, of course, is produced largely in Queensland, and I am sure that the consumption of coke would be very much smaller if hydro-electric power were available, and for that reason I am of opinion that it would pay better to have the works at Cairns than anywhere else in Queensland. The Minister is to be congratulated on bringing in the Bill, and I am sure the Council will pass it, but I hope that, before it leaves this Chamber, it will contain the modifications to which I have referred.

HON. B. FAHEY: The Minister in charge of this Bill treated the House to a very

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interesting and very informative second reading speech. Certainly it was the best speech that the hon. gentleman has delivered in this Chamber. It was evident that he had devoted a great deal of time and no small share of industry to collecting the mass of very valuable information which he has placed at the disposal of this State. Personally, I think that this House and everyone associated with or engaged in the iron industry throughout this State are indebted to the hon. gentleman for the mass of very valuable information that he has collected on the subject. I know that there is probably no country in the world which is more calculated, by the rich deposits of iron ore which the hon. gentleman has shown this State to possess, North, Centre, and South, to become a very large manufacturer of iron and steel, than Queensland. Unquestionably, there are great possibilities for the industry in Queensland. Above and below the surface I think there is no country in the British Empire endowed by Nature more abundantly with every element calculated to make a country prosperous, wealthy, and great than Queensland. Above and below the soil she has every element that is necessary to make Queensland one of the leading countries in the world in the course of time. The Minister has stated that he has had knowledge—and he has proved it, I believe, by information supplied to him by his officers—that Queensland possesses unlimited supplies of iron ore, and notwithstanding the mass of very valuable information he has placed before the Council and the country on the subject, there are very few people—probably no hon. member in this House, at all events—who knows more about the Northern and practically unexplored portion of this State than myself. And I can only say that, with all the information the hon. gentleman has obtained on this subject, he has but merely touched

[4.30 p.m.] the fringe of the iron ore wealth of Queensland and its practically unlimited possibilities. For instance, there is the Cook district, in itself a very large territory, and highly mineralised. There is the York Peninsula, a very large tract of country, and well known also to be highly mineralised. Then there is the extensive watershed of the Gulf country, a great portion of which is known to be highly mineralised, and the country north-west from Burketown extending to the border of the Northern Territory and out to Camooweal, where there are known to be large deposits of silver, lead, and zinc ores that cannot be profitably worked in the absence of railway communication. Right out from Cloncurry to the border, and right along the border of South Australia to New South Wales, the country is practically a terra incognita as far as our knowledge of iron ore is concerned, because when people explored the country for the rarer metals they paid little or no attention to the deposits of iron. The United States at the very dawn of their independence started to supply their own wants by developing their rich natural resources, and when they had overtaken that laudable object they still continued to develop their rich natural resources in order to supply the wants of other countries in exchange for wealth, so that to-day the United States stands second to no other country in the world in commerce, manufacture, and wealth, and that has been brought about in 135 years, and done merely and en-

tirely because the United States, at an early stage of their history, did what this Bill proposes to do, and what I hope we will succeed in doing in due time—that is, supplied their own wants. The United States is one of the most highly endowed countries in the world as far as its natural resources are concerned, though I do not think it is more so than Queensland in that respect, and now, after 135 years of existence, there is not a country in the world that the United States of America stands second to in national power and force, in commerce, in manufacture, and in wealth. I suppose there is no country on the earth, except England, that has not adopted as its national policy the policy which is proposed to be pursued by this Bill; and there is no country on the earth which has contributed more by its national policy than England has done to the consolidation of the commerce, power, and wealth of its merciless enemy, Germany. There is, I say, no country in the world which has done more than England in that respect ever since she repealed her corn laws. England employed 2,000,000 of Germans in their own country for years past manufacturing goods for her that she could have manufactured in her own country, employing her own people, keeping the money she paid for them in her own country earning interest, and increasing her power and influence. One cannot help thinking that in all those years the Germans must have been laughing in their sleeves at the national policy pursued by a great country like England. All those years she was feeding their commerce, feeding their manufacturers, employing their people, and increasing their wealth by pursuing a national policy opposed to every known law of economy. For years before this war started England had allowed Germany to dump free on her wharves from £110,000,000 to £120,000,000 worth of goods annually to compete with her in her own markets.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: We may probably be soft enough to do it again.

HON. B. FAHEY: I hope not. And when England sent her goods across to Germany to compete with Germany in German markets, she had to pay from 40 per cent. to 60 per cent. of the value of the goods by way of taxation before she was allowed to do so. See the progress that Germany has made during the last fifty years in commerce and manufacture. She has the praise of every country on earth to-day for her commerce and manufacturing power, and no army in the world is like her army. She has in that time created a navy which is the second largest in the world, and she has created a mercantile marine which is the second largest in the world, and in all that signifies England's greatness as a nation, Germany would have overtaken in another decade if she had not instituted this murderous war, which I trust will be her doom. All that power has been contributed to mainly by the national policy pursued by England, which is contrary, in my estimation, to every known economic law; and I hope that when the Kaiser is brought to his knees to meet his doom—it does not look very much like his doing so at an early date—that England will alter her plans and commercial policy, and realise that she must not oppose herself to natural economic laws. Some people will say that notwithstanding all this violation of natural economic and political laws, England is still great and

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wealthy. That is not the question. The question is whether England would not, if she had not pursued that policy, be greater in power and influence, and her enemies poorer. Germany would not then be in a position, as she has been lately, to bribe or corrupt her allies with the special purpose of dismembering and disintegrating the British Empire, and enriching herself with spoils from the wreckage. For the last half-century, or at all events, ever since England repealed her corn laws, her policy has been the greatest factor in consolidating and increasing the commercial and manufacturing power and the wealth of Germany, and I hope that when this world-shaking war is ended, England will be wiser and become more glorious than ever she has been, and that she will alter her national policy. I hope that this Bill will pass its second reading, and that it will become law, but with some of its provisions toned down. We should not give the authors of the Bill the power they seek. It looks to me sometimes as if they courted its rejection by this House and did not want us to pass the Bill. The provision that is made for acquiring people's property is far-reaching, and probably they imagined that this House would throw the Bill out on that account. I do not want this Bill to be thrown out. Neither this Parliament nor any other Parliament can be employed on a better or more highly necessary national policy than that of providing that the country shall supply its own wants by developing its own natural resources. Although the Minister's ambition may not be realised in a lifetime, yet a beginning will be made, and before many years are over the great mineral wealth of Queensland will, I hope, be profitably utilised to supply her own wants, and help to supply the wants of the Imperial Government too, because England will not rest on her oars after this war is over, as she has done hitherto, but will be wiser and more enterprising, and will need the help of her dominions. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill, and I hope it will become law with certain amendments.

HON. C. F. MARKS: I desire to congratulate the Minister for Mines on two points which have not been touched upon by other speakers, so far as my recollection goes. One point is that the Minister suggests the starting of coke works at Ipswich. Some of the coal there is a little soft, as will be noted by anybody who sees the black wastage which comes from our chimneys and locomotives. If a proper coking process is adopted, it will lead to the development of the by-products of coal, which consist largely of benzol and tar, and these can be recovered and be made to pay handsomely. I fancy that with one of the modern distillation plants sufficient benzol would be obtained to run nearly all our internal combustion motors here, and also to run the Government motor-cars. (Laughter.) That would be a very economic move; failing our chance of recovering oil at Roma, it might be a very great saving. Further than that, the Minister mentioned that one of the places at which iron ore has been discovered is Brookfield.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: Yes, outside Ipswich.

HON. C. F. MARKS: Near Indooroopilly. Five years ago, I suppose, I saw a sample

of what was practically manganese steel recovered from a lode on the other side of the Gold Creek Reservoir. That was smelted at Smith-Faulkner's foundry down here, and the result, Mr. Faulkner assures me, was the finest steel. I do not know the size of the deposit. Of course, a very great deal depends upon the size of the body of ore, but provided a large body of ore such as that I have mentioned existed near to the Ipswich coalfields and to limestone deposits, and there was convenient water-carriage, if the Government were to start their works they could hardly fail to be a profitable concern. Not only should they spend money on a smelting plant for iron ore, but they should go in for the development of by-products in connection with it, and the manufacture of coke for the copper mines up North. I suppose that, after the reception of the professional advice I gave on the Opticians Bill, I am not likely to influence the Minister for Mines in this case with an unprofessional opinion. (Laughter.) I am sure this undertaking will be a success. (Hear, hear!)

HON. A. A. DAVEY: I should like to say a few words on this important measure. I think we are taking a step in the right direction by trying to make use of our vast iron and steel resources and other mineral wealth. At the present time when the war is upon us, and the State expenditure is very large, in criticising a subject of this kind one is at a disadvantage, because no matter how good or promising an enterprise is we are hardly justified in recommending any very large expenditure. The enemy is not yet beaten, and if Prussianism is not completely knocked out nothing matters very much. I believe we shall ultimately be victorious, but before we are the financial resources of Australia will be drained to the very utmost. In normally prosperous times I cannot conceive of any opposition being raised to a move in the direction of the more complete utilisation of all our great mineral resources. I hope something may be done to develop this great industry, because no nation can become really great until it has comparative control of iron and coal. We have all these resources in our midst, and they only need to be developed. Provided the labour conditions are reasonable, and such as to permit of proper development, I see no reason why Queensland should not become a great iron and steel producing State. I think great credit is due to the Minister and his predecessor for the interest they have taken in this matter. I notice that clause 8 of the Bill gives power to extend operations, and is very vague. It says—

"The Governor in Council may from time to time, by proclamation published in the 'Gazette,' authorise and empower the Minister therein named to undertake, establish, or continue, and to maintain and carry on any business therein designated or described."

It would be a pity to mar a Bill of this sort by loading it up with a vague clause like that. That is practically an unsigned cheque, and would allow the Government to go in for an enormous expenditure and take up any and all sorts of businesses. I think if the Bill is amended so as to confine its operations to iron and steel works, and the necessary products which are associated with iron and steel, all will be well. It would be wise if the Government were given full oppor-

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tunity of action in a legitimate manner, without asking us to commit ourselves to an expenditure which we cannot see the end of. I want to see not only the iron industry, but a number of other industries established, because, valuable as the farmer is, secondary industries are equally valuable. If secondary industries are not established, and operatives employed, there will be no home market for the products of the farmer. What we want to do is to give every possible encouragement to the man on the land. He is the foundation of the country, but he is not everything. You cannot dwell in a foundation, but a foundation is necessary for a house; you must build on it a superstructure, and the secondary industries form the superstructure. This State is capable of enormous developments in this direction. I believe that there is no country on earth which has the possibilities that the Commonwealth of Australia has, and I believe that Queensland is richer in mineral, agricultural, and other resources than any other State in Australia. I shall be very pleased if these works can be started, but I would ask the Minister to accept certain alterations in Committee, as the House would not be justified in giving this Government, or any Government, power to start any or all sorts of enterprises. This is an Iron and Steel Works Bill, and we should be satisfied to limit ourselves to these works alone. If we deal with sugar we should deal with sugar alone; and if we are dealing with meat we should deal with meat alone. We should not give power under the Bill to extend operations to anything which the Government may think fit. If any further industry needs to be taken up, the Government can place the matter before the Chamber, which will always give the Government every support in a legitimate and proper undertaking. We do not want to sign any blank cheques, but to deal with every matter that comes up in a straightforward way. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

HON. E. B. PURNELL: I rise to express my pleasure at the sudden conversion of hon. members opposite to a phase of socialism.

HON. A. A. DAVEY: It is no sudden conversion at all.

HON. E. B. PURNELL: I really think they are coming round, and that before long we shall have them following us in our endeavours to bring about a perfect state of socialism. It is gratifying to think that hon. members who have opposed socialism for such a long time are now assisting a Labour Government to carry out its platform, and I sincerely hope that they will not go back one step. It will be remembered that some eight or nine months ago it was reported in the Press that Mr. Lloyd George, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, said that he hoped neither employers nor employees would go back to the old pre-war conditions, but that they would broaden their minds and endeavour to move in a direction which would prevent all the unfortunate happenings that have caused this present turmoil. As I remarked

[5 p.m.] before, I sincerely hope that we will all strive to do our best for Queensland, and it will make it a happier and better State.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: I am not sure whether I would have spoken at all on this

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Bill if it were not for the remarks of the Hon. Mr. Purnell, who said that he was pleased to note that hon. gentlemen sitting opposite to him were converts to socialism. I am not a convert to socialism. I do not believe in socialism. I never did believe in socialism.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: You don't know socialism?

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Perhaps I do not know socialism, but I can tell the Minister that for the last twenty years, on and off, I have been reading all sorts of socialistic books, including Karl Marx and others.

HON. W. H. DEMAINE: Did you get indigestion?

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Some of them nearly gave me indigestion. I found they were like the speeches of Labour members here—very difficult to understand and very little of an intellectual character about them.

HON. W. H. DEMAINE: That is a reflection on your understanding.

HON. H. C. JONES: You are on the wane now.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: The hon. gentleman who tells me that I am on the wane is only a new member in this House, and I do not know that he has exhibited any great intellectual activity since he has been here. It is better to be on the wane than never to have been anything.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: " 'Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all."

HON. P. J. LEAHY: The Minister does not quote Ella Wheeler Wilcox now, but gives me a bit of Tennyson, and he says " 'Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all." I think it is better to have loved and not lost, and it is better to have reached some intellectual eminence than not to have done anything at all. I consider most of us on this side have reached some intellectual eminence. I believe, however nice socialism may be, and however attractive it may be as an ideal, that the thing is utterly unworkable in practice.

HON. W. H. DEMAINE: We are living in the midst of it now.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Can the hon. gentleman show me where we are living in the midst of socialism now? We have no evidence of it.

HON. W. H. DEMAINE: You walk down a socialistic street to Parliament House every day.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: If I do walk down a socialistic street it is better than walking on some of the socialistic planks of the Government. I quite admit that there are certain things which should be carried out by a centralised Government. Everyone realises that. Everyone recognises that the Post Office can be run better by a Government than it can be run by a private individual.

HON. G. S. CURTIS: That is very questionable.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: We recognise that there are some things that a Government can do better than an individual.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: A proper Government.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Yes, a proper Government. I was not 'referring to this Government. (Laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You are being prompted by the Hon. Mr. Fowles.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: I accept it more readily when it comes from such a source. Intelligent people recognise that there is a limit beyond which the Government cannot do these things successfully. There are a number of things which the Government do which can be done better by private enterprise. With regard to this Bill, it is certainly a Bill of a socialistic character. As a person who does not believe in socialism, and as a person who believes that in practice, with the exceptions that I mentioned a moment ago, socialism will not hold its own, it might be supposed that I would be an opponent of this Bill. While I am an opponent of this Bill in the form in which it comes before us, I do not propose to oppose the Bill if it is reduced in such a way as to confine it to iron and steel (Hear, hear!) Under the Bill as it stands now, the Government could engage in any department of human industry. They would do practically anything they liked. They could be shipowners, they could be coal owners, they could be anything imaginable. It is not a fair thing that we should allow those powers to remain in the Bill. The title of the Bill is a misnomer, and we will have to alter it to square it with the altered contents of the Bill. There are certain words in the title of the Bill which are apparently of a harmless nature, but they are of very far-reaching importance. It is called—

“A Bill to authorise the establishment, continuance, and carrying on of State iron and steel works and other industries, and for other purposes.”

If we stopped at iron and steel works it would be all right, but we should leave out the words “and other industries and for other purposes,” and limit the Bill to the establishment of iron and steel works. The Bill would then have my support, and, from the opinions I have heard from other hon. members, I think it would also have their support.

HON. W. H. DEMAINE: Notwithstanding that it is socialism?

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Notwithstanding that it is socialism.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Should we not give instructions to the Committee to confine it to that?

HON. P. J. LEAHY: It is a question whether it should not be an instruction to the Committee from this House to alter the Bill in that direction. I am not sure that it is necessary. I know that it might be necessary to give an instruction to the Committee if we want to enlarge the scope of the Bill, but I do not know that it requires an instruction to eliminate anything from the Bill. It seemed to give a great mental shock to the Hon. H. C. Jones that I did not believe in socialism, and he wonders by what process of mental reasoning I arrive at the position that I do not oppose this Bill. I think it is desirable that I should give my reasons

to the House and to the Hon. H. C. Jones. The Hon. H. C. Jones is a comparatively new member, and he has a great deal to learn in this Chamber and probably outside the Chamber as well. I recognise what are the functions of this Council. I take it that our functions are not to oppose everything that comes up here, even although it does not square with our own individual opinions. We recognise that the Government has come here with some kind of a mandate, although a very small mandate, of a few thousand votes from the people. It is questionable what methods were used to obtain that mandate. It was probably obtained under false pretences. However, we have to recognise that the Government comes here with a mandate, and it is not part of our functions to reject with contumely every Bill that comes here. If Bills come here that are somewhat of an experimental or socialistic character, so long as it does not inflict any injustice on any class of the community, and so long as it does not contain any principle of repudiation and it does not take away any individual rights, then we are willing to pass it, even although it may be of a somewhat socialistic character, and even although it may commit the Government to certain expenditure of loan money, and even although it may be used for purposes that are doubtful. That is the position I take up with regard to this Bill. We recognise that the Government have some kind of a mandate, and we recognise that it is not our function to oppose everything they bring in. Where a thing is inherently bad it is our duty to cast it into outer darkness and into utter oblivion. Very possibly the Government will lose a certain amount of money, but we ought to give the Government a chance to start steel and iron works. One thing we have to consider is the amount of money that will be involved. As the Bill stands at present the Minister has a clean sheet. There is absolutely no limit to the amount of expenditure that he can go to. I presume that the Government will act on the recommendation of the Minister. If we had a Minister who was not as level headed as the Minister for Mines now in the Chamber, when you can get him away from politics, it might be dangerous to give him large powers in the way of expenditure; but I feel that whilst it is incumbent on us to limit the amount of money which could be expended under this Bill, at the same time we would not be treating the Minister or the experiment fairly unless we put in a sufficient amount to enable him to give the system a fair trial. It is a very big question as to whether iron and steel works can be established and carried on.

HON. G. S. CURTIS: It may involve a loss and mean more taxation.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: It is a big question whether iron and steel works can be established and carried on profitably or without a loss to the State. We hear a great deal about establishing industries and we hear it pretty well from people who live in the cities. We never hear it from the primary producers. It is always the people who congregate in the large towns who talk about establishing large industries, and they do not have to pay anything towards them; but it is always the primary producer or other taxpayer who has to pay if there is a

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loss. It is doubtful if this industry can be made to pay. I think, myself, that under normal conditions it is best for every country to produce the things which they can produce better and cheaper than other countries, and if other countries can produce certain goods cheaper than we can it would pay us to sell our primary products to them and import their manufactured products.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You must remember that in this case we are not interfering with any established industry.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: I admit that we are not interfering with any established industry, but if we are doing something which will result in a loss, that loss will have to be paid by the general taxpayer. The working man will not have to pay any of the tax. Hon. members know whom I refer to as the working men. The Hon. Mr. Demaine might call himself a working man and the Hon. Mr. Beirne may not be considered to be a working man, although I am certain that the Hon. Mr. Beirne does twelve times the work that the Hon. Mr. Demaine does. The working man will not be called upon to pay the taxation to meet any loss in connection with an enterprise of this kind. The man who will pay for the loss will be the farmer on the land and other taxpayers. The bulk of the people who make £3 or £4 a week will not be called upon to pay a copper. We have to recognise that iron and steel are two of the greatest things that are produced in the world. There may be times when the ordinary channels of intercourse by sea will be interrupted. We have one of those times now. We know that our intercourse by sea is interrupted at the present time. We have to recognise that, if iron and steel cannot be imported, then in the interests of the country, and perhaps in the defence of the country, it might be necessary to produce our own iron and steel in competition with other countries. It is not unreasonable that the whole of the people should pay if there should be a loss, seeing the benefit they will derive in the way of defence from having an opportunity of producing those things which are used very largely in time of war, and producing them without any trouble or interference from outside. Such a payment would partake of the nature of insurance. To my mind, that is the biggest, if not the only, argument that can be used in favour of the establishment of iron works in this State. As I have already pointed out, the Bill contains very many objectionable things. For instance, the Government want to have power to acquire certain things and to pay for them in debentures; but there is no rate of interest specified for the debentures, and, if the Government want to be unjust, if we pass this Bill without alteration, they can acquire land and other things, fix their own price for them, and then pay for them in debentures, on which they will have power to pay interest at the rate of, say, 1 per cent. or 1½ per cent. In that way they can secure the property at very much below its intrinsic value. There is also very much too large a power given to the Governor in Council with regard to regulations and other matters, and there is the old thing, which I should have imagined they would have given up by now, which provides that, if each House of Parliament disallows regulations, they shall become

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invalid. That looks very innocent on the face of it, but it really means that it is necessary that both Houses of Parliament shall disallow those regulations, which means that, if we disallow them and the other place does not, the regulations will stand. That, I take it, we will deal with in the manner in which we usually deal with similar provisions. Summing it all up, I think, under all the circumstances, that we may very well let the Bill go into Committee, and, if the Minister is wise, recognising as he must—because he has heard the speeches that have been delivered in this Chamber—the general desire that the Bill should be narrowed down to deal with iron and steel works only, he will not delay business by offering any unnecessary opposition to amendments to reduce the measure within that compass. If he does that, and the Bill goes through in such an amended form, whether it results in a profit or a loss—and I am rather afraid that it will be the latter—we shall at least have shown the hon. gentleman that we were willing to try the experiment. If the experiment comes up to the level of the hon. gentleman's expectations, no one will be better pleased than I. If, on the other hand, it fails, I shall regret it. One of the chief reasons which leads me to think that there is a chance of its failure is that my experience has shown me that no Government, except in connection with the few things that I have already indicated, can do as well as a private individual or combination of individuals.

HON. R. BEDFORD: How can they hope to succeed if you take all the guts out of the thing?

HON. P. J. LEAHY: The Hon. Mr. Bedford—who has just come into the House, which accounts for the fact that I have not been very much interrupted up to the present—tells me in what I may call classical language—although it might be given another name—that it is intended to emasculate the Bill. I am rather disappointed in the hon. gentleman. He is not coming up to expectations. He is not keeping his promise. It was only recently that in a publication with a large circulation he told us that in politics his ideas would be expressed “in language rich and rare.” I appeal to hon. members if the language he has just interjected is either “rich and rare,” or classical.

HON. R. BEDFORD: It does not waste time.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: If the hon. member had been here a little earlier, he would have heard my remarks, and he would have known that, while I pointed out certain objections to the Bill, I am not going to oppose it, but I think it should be restricted to establishing iron and steel works. I endeavoured to do what I have never known the hon. gentleman do. I endeavoured to give the arguments on both sides. It is only by doing that that we can arrive at the truth. But the hon. gentleman can only see one side of a thing, and, because we are not all willing to accept his views, then, like a Maxim gun, he emits a series of interjections and attempts to overwhelm us. I trust that the Minister will consider what I have said with regard to amendments, and, I hope, if—as probably he will be—he is amenable to reason in the directions I have indicated, a start will be made. If it is successful, I am

sure we shall all be pleased, and, if it is a failure, it will be only another instance of the failure of socialism.

HON. W. R. CRAMPTON: I have no desire to prolong the debate. Judging by what has been said by the last two or three speakers, it is quite evident that the second reading of the Bill will be carried. To me that is very gratifying, because, judging by certain remarks that were made when the Bill was first introduced, I concluded that it was going to have a very warm reception, and to meet with the same fate that other Bills met with earlier in the session. The Hon. Mr. Leahy, when speaking, did not forget to remind us that the Government responsible for the introduction of the measure are occupying the Treasury benches under politically false pretences. My only reply to that is that his friend who is introducing the conscription proposals—

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Who is that?

HON. W. R. CRAMPTON: Mr. Hughes.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: My friend! I don't know him. I never spoke to him.

HON. W. R. CRAMPTON: If the hon. member can say that the party responsible for the introduction of this measure occupy the Treasury benches under politically false pretences, then I say the methods adopted by the hon. member's friend amount to nothing but political assault and battery.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: I rise to a point of order. I do not suppose that it is imputing motives or libelling a man to say that he is a friend of the Prime Minister of Australia, but there are certain innuendoes in the hon. member's speech which might reflect on me. It is no part of my business to justify any action of the Prime Minister. All that I can say is that I have never had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Hughes, and that I am not in the least responsible for his actions, whether they be good or evil.

HON. W. R. CRAMPTON: I accept the apology of the hon. gentleman. (Laughter.) It need only be said again that the party responsible for the introduction of this Bill have a mandate from the people. They came back with an overwhelming majority when the last appeal was made to the people, and we believe that the same result will accrue when the next appeal is made. In my opinion the carrying of this measure will mark a stage in the development of this State towards making Queensland self-contained. I was very much interested in a discussion I heard in the South some few months ago when the Institute of Science and Industry took up this question. They have shown the absolute necessity for the introduction of a measure of this description and for the development of our rich natural resources. They have shown in a London publication that, had it not been for the development of her mineral and other natural resources, Great Britain would be very much worse off to-day than she is. The fact that these resources were so well developed placed the British people in a much better position than they would otherwise have occupied. I have a good many things to say in connection with this subject, but there is no necessity for me to do more than to remind hon. members of a few facts contained in one or two reports that have been issued. The following figures will give an idea of the value of imports into Queensland and the Commonwealth, so far as iron and

steel are concerned. The figures are taken from the Commonwealth "Trade Statistics for the year 1915-16"—

	Into Common-wealth. £	Into Queensland. £
Metal unmanufactured and ores (iron and steel—pig)	119,698	5,501
Metals partly manufactured (iron and steel bar, rod, etc.) ...	938,247	92,167
Iron and steel—hoop ...	90,748	15,098
Ingots, etc.	20,698	1,278
Scrap	6,586	1,807
	£1,175,977	£115,851

Hon. members will see that right through Queensland has been receiving really more than one-sixth of the amount that has been imported into Australia—a rattling good argument, in my opinion, for the rapid development of an industry such as this Bill deals with. As to imports of other manufactures of metals, the figures assume large proportions. In the whole of the Commonwealth a value of £13,013,699 is imported. Of this Queensland takes £1,747,974 for its share. A very large percentage of this total embraces manufactures composed of iron and steel. I next take the value of imports of iron and steel, and manufactures of iron and steel—

"The value of the imports, involving iron and steel, into Queensland so far as can be ascertained from the figures in the Statistical Department, for the year 1915-16, would amount to over £2,250,000. This amount is made up as follows:—Hardware and ironmongery, £515,000; iron and steel (including rails, wire, pipes, wire netting, etc.), £1,063,000; machinery, vehicles, motors, etc., £708,000. Total, £2,286,000.

"For the whole Commonwealth, under the above headings, the amount of imports would approximately total over £14,000,000."

Judging by the speech that was delivered in this Chamber by the Minister when moving the second reading of the Bill, there is no doubt that we have rich deposits of very pure iron ore in Queensland. Without contradiction the hon. gentleman was able to say—and his remarks were based upon the report of a geological survey—that in the Biggenden district alone there are something like 500,000 tons of 72 per cent. ore, and that the deposit produced its own flux. This

locality is within easy reach of [5.30 p.m.] the seaboard, being only 50 miles from Maryborough, and not only is the ore pure, but it produces its own flux; and every facility should be given for the and rapid development of that particular field. I do not know that I need detain the House at any greater length. It is quite evident that the work in connection with this Bill will be done in Committee, and I am satisfied to allow the matter to go at this stage, as I know the Bill will pass its second reading. I sincerely hope that when the measure gets into Committee, it will receive the consideration it deserves, and that it will pass as it did in the Legislative Assembly.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES, in reply: I do not usually speak in reply on the second reading of a Bill, but on this occasion I think it my duty to add a few facts to those already given to the House when

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introducing the Bill, and also to express my appreciation of the remarks which have fallen from hon. gentlemen on both sides of the House with regard to this measure.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: And with regard to yourself.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I appreciate very much the remarks which have been made on this Bill. I am well aware that many hon. members in this Chamber cannot see eye to eye with the Government on all their proposals, but I am pleased to know that this Bill, which is of a national character, has had a splendid reception in this Chamber. One or two amendments have been indicated, and the Bill will probably be amended in Committee, but I sincerely hope that it will not be amended in such a way as will restrict the Government to an extent which will make it impossible for them to carry on. The Hon. Dr. Marks said this afternoon that we should start at the beginning. I agree with the hon. gentleman, and I said that by way of interjection last night. I think we should start with the production of coke. A large quantity of coke will be required to smelt iron. The Broken Hill Proprietary Company, who have established iron works at Newcastle, have found it better to provide their own coke than to depend upon supplies from outside. If we started works of any dimensions suitable for this State, and commensurate with our iron deposits, we should produce our own coke. We could certainly start in a very small way, as was indicated by myself three or four months ago, and purchase a little coke for use in a small oven capable of turning out 30 or 40 tons of pig iron per day. But to manufacture pig iron and pipes, and probably our own steel rails, we should certainly have our own coke works. By installing a coke plant we should save all the by-products, as has been suggested by the Hon. Dr. Marks. With regard to the cost of a plant, I may inform the House that the estimated cost of a modern by-product oven of the capacity of 63 tons per day, is £21,000 at pre-war prices. As I have previously pointed out, the waste that goes on in connection with coke-making in Queensland is criminal, and at pre-war prices amounts to something like 14s. 6d. per ton of coke produced. If we can conserve the waste, as they do in other countries, we shall be doing a good thing for the State. Perhaps the most up-to-date coalmining method in operation in the world to-day is that which is being carried on by the Japanese at Fusun, in China, where, in addition to the production of huge quantities of sulphate of ammonia, etc., the gases produced are utilised to drive the whole of the mining machinery, as well as provide power for the electrification of the 45 miles of railway, over which many thousand tons of coal are transported per day. This company, which started operations in 1914, have recently ordered machinery sufficient to double their output of by-products. Japan and China have joined together in the establishment of large iron and steel works. Here is an extract on this subject from a newspaper—

JAPANESE AND CHINESE CO-OPERATION.

"What is stated to be the first co-operative enterprise of Japanese and Chinese capital recently was effected. The project aims at the development of China's largest iron and steel enterprise, and a company with a capital

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of £1,000,000, has been formed. One-half of this has been subscribed by Chinese, and the other by one of the most influential mining investors in Japan. The Chinese parties have control of the celebrated iron works, and the new concern has entered into a contract for the purchase, from the works, of a large fixed quantity of pig iron, which will be shipped to Japan, where the co-operation will erect extensive steel works. With this assured supply of new material, guaranteed at an advantageous rate, the new enterprise looks for profits, the entire interests and earnings of the organisation being equally divided between the Chinese and Japanese investors."

We, in Australia, should keep pace with other countries of the world, especially with China and Japan in a matter of this kind. I think it was the Hon. Mr. Fahey who pointed out in his eloquent speech this afternoon that there was a stage in the history of the United States of America when that country found she could not become great until she developed her iron resources. Look at the wonderful strides that the United States have since made in the production of iron and steel, and let that be a lesson to us.

HON. G. S. CURTIS: We are only a handful of people compared with them.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I agree with the hon. gentleman. I am one of those who believe, and have always believed, that this country is not sufficiently populated, and although the party with which I am associated are often accused of not encouraging immigration, I say we should encourage immigration of the right sort. What Queensland wants, and what Australia wants, is more people, and one way of encouraging more people to come here is by establishing our secondary industries and developing the natural resources of the country. The fact that we are a handful of people is no reason why we should not start iron and steel works on a small scale. The Hon. Mr. Hall made a remark with which I entirely concur. I was pleased with his remarks, as I was pleased with the speeches of other hon. gentlemen. I think that the speeches made on this Bill were not only sympathetic, but were also of a high character. We may differ politically, but members generally have approached this measure from a national standpoint. The Hon. Mr. Hall pointed out that even if the proposed works were an experiment which resulted in a loss, they would be of some benefit to the State later on. A great man once said that if you never make a mistake you will never make anything. I am not anticipating that there will be any large mistake made in this matter, but I say that a great deal of exploration work must be done. We want a good deal more information than we have got, and I am pleased with the advice which has been tendered to us that we should be careful and go fairly steadily, especially in the selection of a site for the works; and that we should get the fullest possible information regarding the quality of our ore and the size of our deposits before we incur a huge expenditure which may not be required. We are engaged in getting that information at the present time. In one State of America, a company which is going to operate in Brazil, have no less than five geologists set apart for research work in

connection with the ore deposits of the country. This is one of the facts which go to prove that the world is requiring iron, that all the nations to-day are after iron and steel, and are endeavouring to develop their own deposits. In Australia we shall require iron for shipbuilding. I believe that the Broken Hill Proprietary Company at Newcastle rolled out the first sheet of steel at their works a few weeks ago when the Governor of this State was there on a visit. It seems rather strange that in Australia we have the ability to plan works at Newcastle for the Broken Hill Company, to produce our own copper and electrolytically refine it, and yet we send it over sea for the simple process of rolling. I am glad that the Newcastle works have now established, at a cost of £20,000, an addition to their plant simply for the rolling of the steel for steel sheets. The same thing will apply to galvanised iron. We want tin plates, of which we know there is a shortage owing to the war. That is a part of the production of an iron works. That is one reason why I do not think the Government should be too much restricted. We send away tin ore from Queensland and other parts of Australia when we could manufacture it here. We should be able to roll out our own tin. The Newcastle enterprise shows that we have the ability to plan those works, and surely we have the ability to manufacture the articles which we require, and to roll our steel. The Newcastle works were planned for the Broken Hill Proprietary Company by a young Queenslander, the son of a member of this House who has recently passed away. I refer to the Hon. C. S. McGhie, who died recently in Maryborough. I believe that his son, who is now in England, could have come out to Australia again as manager of those large works at Newcastle. A Queensland boy, born in Maryborough, was able to qualify himself, and to plan the works in Newcastle.

Hon. H. TURNER: All honour to him.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is why I mention it here. I believe we have all the ability required.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: Would the Newcastle people help you to establish the State works here?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I spent a very interesting hour a few weeks ago with the manager at the Newcastle works, Mr. Lewis. I do not know his political opinions. He was very kind and gave me all information.

Hon. T. J. O'SHEA: His political opinions would be no bar on that point.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I do not want to say that Mr. Lewis encouraged the establishment of a State iron and steel works, but he showed us every courtesy and told us that we were on the right track. I am of opinion that the State can do equally as well as private enterprise if they set about the business in a proper manner.

Hon. J. CURTIS: They will be subject to political influence.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I do not think so. I certainly agree with the Hon. Mr. Fowles that this industry would not stand too much competition at the present time.

Hon. T. J. O'SHEA: A private individual can give the State 20 per cent. and a beating.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I do not think so. I think we will be able to prove that that is not possible, the same as the day-labour system was proved the other day to be more successful than the contract system. We can produce coal just as cheap as private individuals produce it.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: What quantity of coke would be produced by a £25,000 plant?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We could produce 63 tons of coke per day by a plant which would cost £21,000; every additional £3,000 expenditure would produce as much again. The installation of the first plant would be the chief expense. I want to start with the coke, and use all the by-products, and employ all the power that will be produced by the production of coke for the heating of a hot-blast furnace and for the running of the whole of the works. Then, we utilise the waste in connection with the production of coke. We can produce our own coke, and our own pig iron and pipes, and very shortly we will be able to make the steel rails which will be required for our own railways. It is proved now that rails made from Australian ore are equal to any that we have imported from overseas. I do not think we can depend so much on overseas products in the future.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Can you get sufficient rails in Australia for your requirements at the present time?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I do not think so. I learnt the other day that the British Government were likely to commandeer the whole of the steel produced at the Newcastle works. We can take this much to our credit as Australians: that we produced 80-lb. rails at Newcastle which were sent overseas to France. Some of the first rails produced from Australian ore have been used in this war.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: What is the price of 60-lb. rails at Newcastle?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The present contract price is £12 10s. per ton.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: We could import them at £7 10s. per ton before the war.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I want to deal with the manufacturing cost of rails. I will prove by a quotation that we can produce rails in Australia at £6 10s. per ton.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: You have just said they were £12 10s. at Newcastle.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is the contract price. I do not think we can buy them to-day at £12 10s., but the hon. gentleman knows that we are not living under normal conditions. In establishing this industry, I think we should base our arguments on pre-war prices. I am not going to try to delude the people of Queensland. There is no need for me to try to delude this House; that would be difficult, because hon. members know as much as I do about the matter. I do not want to delude the people of Queensland by basing my arguments on the present prices of iron and steel, as that would be absurd; but later on I can prove that we can produce pig iron at a cost below that which we paid for imported iron prior to the war.

Hon. T. J. O'SHEA: You think you can.

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The SECRETARY FOR MINES: If it can be done in New South Wales it can be done in Queensland, where we have a better quality of ore with a higher percentage of iron, and where we can more easily assemble the ore and the material required for the manufacture of steel. I gave an estimated cost of a coke-producing plant. A plant erected complete in the United States to produce 63 tons of coke per day costs £21,000. That plant could be increased for a very little expenditure, because it does not follow, if you want to produce 126 tons per day, that the plant must cost £42,000. For an expenditure of a few thousand pounds you can double your output of coke. A plant with a capacity of 21,125 tons of coke per annum would yield a gross revenue per annum of £44,748, made up as follows:—

21,105 tons of coke at £1 5s. per ton	26,381
393.8 tons of ammonium sulphate at £18 per ton	7,084
251,920 gallons of tar, at 7d. per gallon (pre-war price)	7,347
157,450,000 cubic feet of gas, at 6d.	
1,000 cubic feet	3,936
Total	£44,748

I have estimated the price of coke at £1 5s. per ton, which is cheaper than the present price. I have some figures here which I might read to the House—

NET REVENUE PER ANNUM.

	£
Less 31,490 tons of coal, at 5s. per ton	7,872
Working costs on production of 21,105 tons of coke, at 2s. 6d.	2,637
Working costs on production and recovery of 393.8 tons ammonium sulphate	1,417
Working costs on production and distillation of tar	1,837
Repairs, wear and tear of plant	666
Taxes, insurance, etc.	350
Office expenses, etc.	500
Amortisation, at 10 per cent. on £23,000	2,800
Interest at 6 per cent.	1,680
	£19,758

"Note.—For every increase of 1d. per ton in the price of coal delivered at the cooking ovens, 1½d. must be added to the cost of coke per ton, equivalent to a reduction of £132 per annum on the net profits.

PROFITS ON BY-PRODUCTS.

	£
Ammonium sulphate	5,667
Refined tar products	5,510
Gas	3,936
	£15,113

Equivalent to 9s. 7d. per ton of coal used.
Equivalent to 14s. 3½d. per ton of coke produced.

"The cost of amortisation, interest, insurance, office expenses, etc., amount to £5,996 per annum, equivalent to 5s. 8d. per ton of coke produced.

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"Net profits per ton of coke produced, taking coal at 5s. per ton, and selling price of coke at £1 per ton."

I want to point this out to prove that we have gone into the costs for coke ovens and other works, as near as we can get them. Our prices are based on pre-war prices for the selling of coke and other by-products. I am particularly anxious that some notice may be taken of these figures, because it would be unwise for this House to restrict the Government to a few thousand pounds in this matter. Parliament will always have the power to deal with the matter. No Government would go into this matter unless they intended to make it a success, and the Government would cease any works or operations if they found they were detrimental to the best interests of the people. I was also dealing with the cost of producing rails. I have here a report of the Royal Commission on the iron and steel industry in New South Wales, dated 31st October, 1911. It is quite a long report, and the information is the latest. The commissioner was Mr. Frederick Wilson Paul. He took exhaustive evidence, and one of his concluding paragraphs read—

"In my opinion, however, £6 10s. per ton without any bonus would be a reasonable price to pay for the manufacture of 80-lb. rails, manufactured in Australia, from Australian ores, and a well-equipped modern steel plant properly managed."

That is, so far as the cost of production of rails is concerned. I could quote other evidence in verification of my argument regarding the cost of production of rails, but it is not necessary. Some hon. members here, and the outside public also, have doubted my statement about the cost of producing pig iron. The commission in New South Wales was appointed to inquire into—

"(a) The suitability of ores within our said State, or within other States of our Commonwealth for the manufacture of iron and steel;

"(b) The cost at which the various classes of iron and steel required by our Governments of our said Commonwealth and States could be produced from local ores;

"(c) Whether the arrangement entered into by our Government of our State of New South Wales with Messrs. G. and C. Hoskins Limited, for the supply of iron and steel is beneficial to our said Government;

"(d) What is a satisfactory price for the supply of steel rails for railway purposes produced at the works in New South Wales of Messrs. G. and C. Hoskins Limited, aforesaid; and

"(e) The approximate cost of a plant capable of producing the iron and steel likely to be required in the future by our Government of our Commonwealth of Australia, and of our several Australian States."

Other Governments in other States have considered the question of such vital importance that they appointed commissions. The Commonwealth Government appointed a commission to inquire into the bonus system and there they stopped. They did not go any further. They allowed private enterprise in New South Wales to establish the indus-

try. When I said that pig iron could be produced at £3 per ton, some hon. members smiled at the statement, but I find from Mr. Paul's report that he says—

"From an inspection of Messrs. Hoskins's blast furnace wages-sheet and records showing the consumption of material, I estimate that the cost of manufacture of pig iron at Lithgow at present does not exceed £2 18s. per ton. If it were not for the inferior quality of the coke, this cost could be readily reduced by 3s. per ton. . . . I am satisfied that pig iron, comparing very favourably with English hematite pig iron, could be produced in Australia at £2 14s. per ton. This price is 7s. per ton lower than in good practice in England."

That shows that pig iron can be produced in Queensland at the estimated cost that I previously gave. At a meeting of the American Institute of Mining Engineers in September, 1915, Mr. Charles C. Jones, a recognised authority on the iron and steel industry, stated—

"It is a fact that Chinese pig iron is being sold in San Francisco on some large contracts at 18½ dollars per ton, while 19 dollars is the usual price (1915). We ought to produce iron on this coast at 14 dollars (£2 18s. 4d.). Personally, I do not think Chinese iron is ever going to be an important factor. It is a bug-bear out here now. You are not going to have much Chinese pig iron in this

country. Our little friend Japan is going to absorb everything it can. The price of Chinese pig iron at 18 dollars per ton is about as low as it will ever get. I think you will have a good opportunity to compete with anything China or India can ever do. Costs there are very low now. They are going to come up by leaps and bounds in the next few years. The labour cost over there may be very low now, but I have seen some men from there quite recently who say the costs are going up. Those people cannot live under the conditions that are imposed upon them at the present time."

That statement was made just over two years ago, and, as showing that it is founded on absolute truth, mention need only be made of the fact that rice—the staple food of the coolie—has increased by over 200 per cent. in retail price in China during the past three years, while still further proof of the vastly increased cost of living in the East is demonstrated by the trebling of the sums of money that are now being sent from Australia to China by dutiful sons for the keep of their aged parents as compared to just prior to the war. That shows that both the Chinese and Japanese may come up to our standard, so we need not have any great fear of iron competition from China or Japan. As a matter of fact, Japan will take all the iron that China can produce for many years. The following table shows the imports into Queensland of iron and steel, from overseas, before the war and during the past two years:—

OVERSEAS* IMPORTS INTO QUEENSLAND OF IRON AND STEEL BEFORE THE WAR AND DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS.

Description of Goods.	YEAR ENDING—					
	31 December, 1913.		30 June, 1916.		30 June, 1917.	
	Weight.	Value.	Weight.	Value.	Weight.	Value.
	Cwt.	£	Cwt.	£	Cwt.	£
Rails, pipes, joists, wire, anchors, etc.	...	929,835	...	1,053,520	...	607,393
Pig Iron	66,687	14,845	22,974	5,501	3,383	1,864
Ingots, blooms, slabs, and crude manufacture	816	669	1,669	1,278	633	1,390

*The figures showing imports into this State from other parts of the Commonwealth are not obtainable, but the amount so imported must be of considerable tonnage and value, particularly in the matter of rails and pig iron.

Those figures show that we imported quite a high value of iron material into Queensland, and, therefore, the necessity arises for utilising our own resources, and smelting our own pig iron and making our own pipes and our own steel rails. The scheme the Government have in view—that I have in view, at any rate—is that we shall start right at the beginning, and that we shall take the advice of hon. gentlemen who are interesting themselves in this question—advice tendered in good faith—and be very careful that we go steady. We shall be especially careful in the way of selecting sites. But the scheme is that we shall produce pig iron and manufacture our own pipes. We use quite a lot of pipes in connection with our waterworks in this State, and we will need to use a

lot more for our sewerage works. Later on we can branch out into the manufacture of steel rails for our railways. But, if we start at the beginning and produce our own coke and smelt pig iron for the manufacture of pipes, that will be a big step in the right direction. In the meantime it is our intention to put up a small furnace at some place adjacent to one of the iron ore deposits—say, at Biggenden—to prove the ore and produce pig iron at the same time while it is at a high price, and prove some of the other deposits by smelting the actual ore and producing pig iron. I spoke at length when moving the second reading of the Bill, and I simply rose on this occasion to add a few additional facts to my previous speech, and to say that I appreciate the manner in which the Bill has been received by hon. members. I hope

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that we shall shortly be able to commence the erection of a furnace and a plant that some day in the not distant future will supply Queensland with all the iron that it may require for the building of our railways and for other purposes. (Hear, hear!)

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed.

The committal of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

REGULATION OF SUGAR CANE PRICES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

COMMITTEE.

(Hon. W. F. Taylor in the chair.)

Clause 1—“*Short title and construction of Act*”—put and passed.

On clause 2—“*Amendment of section 3 (Interpretation)*”—

HON. C. F. NIELSON: The first amendment in his printed list of amendments was to omit subclause (1) of clause 3. He had omitted to have an amendment printed on clause 2. He moved the insertion, after line 22, of the following:—

“The following words are added to the definition of ‘Owner of a mill’ in the said section:—

‘Provided that this Act shall not be deemed to apply to the central mills known as Mulgrave Central Mill, Mossman Central Mill, Isis Central Mill, and Plane Creek Central Mill.’”

His reason for moving the amendment was that the Mulgrave and Mossman central mills had never applied for a local cane prices board. They had petitioned the Council on two occasions, the last being the other day, when he handed in petitions from those mills, asking that they should not be included under the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act. The Isis Central Mill was also in the same position. They had petitioned to be left out of the Act, and they sent down one of their leading directors, Mr. Hodge, to give evidence before the Select Committee appointed by the Council last year. On pages 34 to 38 of the report of the Select Committee he gave reasons why the directors and suppliers of the mill did not want their mill included under the Act. Those reasons were exactly the same as the reasons given by the Mulgrave and Mossman central mills. The reasons were that, after paying all expenses for the year, whatever was left was divided pro rata among all the suppliers of cane.

HON. T. J. O’SHEA: In proportion to the tonnage supplied?

HON. C. F. NIELSON: No; at per ton, quite irrespective of whether they were shareholders in the mill or not. He might point out that, so far as the Isis Central Mill was concerned, the constitution was such that the shares were attached to the land belonging to the mill over which the Government held mortgages. The company had paid their interest and redemption from the beginning, and were a shining example in that respect. The general manager of the central mills, in discussing their financial position compared the North Eton Central Mill with the Isis Central Mill, and said—

“The North Eton Mill’s affairs are still in a serious condition, but with

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good management there is a possibility of recovering the position to some extent this year. The unsatisfactory financial position of this mill has been largely due to the overpayment for cane by the directors representing shareholder cane-growers of the mill. In contrast to this action is that of the Isis Central Mill Company, Limited, which paid at the rate of 15s. per ton of cane to its suppliers in order that its financial obligation should be met.

“It is refreshing to note the action of the Isis Central Mill Company, Limited, and it may be commended to other mills, including mills under Government control.”

The constitution of the Isis Central Mill was such that the shares were attached to the land. There could be no dry shareholders. Supposing originally a man had put in his 100 acres of land to the mill and got a certain number of shares, then those shares were held by him so long as he remained on that 100 acres of land. If a person came along and bought 50 acres of that land, the owner must transfer with those 50 acres half his shares in the mill; if he sold 25 acres, then he must transfer one-fourth of his shares in the mill. The Isis Central Mill paid every supplier, whether he was a shareholder supplier or an outside supplier, the same price for cane, with one exception, and that was the farmers on the railway line known as the Cordalba-Booyal Railway. There were some farmers in the district of Booyal and the adjacent district who requested the Isis Central Mill to take cane from them, and every individual farmer made an agreement with the mill under which the Isis Central Mill undertook to take cane from that district. It was provided in the agreement that the railway freight on the cane should be paid by the canegrower. He might mention that one of the considerations for that was a certain siding in the Isis Central Mill yard, which was built in order to enable them to handle cane brought by the Government 3 feet 6 inches gauge railway. With that exception, the company paid the same price to all suppliers irrespective of whether they were shareholders in the mill or otherwise. About eighteen months or two years ago, when the Act first came into force, some of the outside shareholders asked for a cane prices board to be constituted in respect of the Isis Central Mill, and a board was constituted. He believed it was for the 1915 season in the first instance. The application came before the Central Board at Childers, but he forgot whether it was by delegation from the local board or otherwise. The agreement he had referred to was put before the Central Board, and the board awarded the price paid by the mill in pursuance of the agreement and in pursuance of the practice of the mill. Mr. Hodge, at page 35 of his evidence before the Select Committee last year, read a letter, from which the following extracts were taken:—

“In the case of our mill (and all other central mills) the prices paid for cane are the highest possible. This can be verified by the reports of the Government auditor, who examines the books annually. These prices cannot be increased, and, as we are canegrowers, we certainly will not allow them to sink below what we can pay. Surely, with so many central mills paying for cane,

the price paid by proprietary mills can be reached at and fixed without any price board."

Then he went on to point out that—

"An Act that confers on a few malcontents the power to force upon the whole body conditions that are repugnant to them, besides imposing taxation that is as unnecessary as it is severe, should not find a place on our statute-book.

"Failing the abolition of this most obnoxious Act, we would respectfully ask that the central mills in general, and the Isis Mill in particular, be removed from its operations, for the reason that no price board can fix a price other than the price paid by any honest directorate of a central mill.

"Again, we strongly object to be compared with central mills whose obligations are left to one side, or mills whose high prices are maintained from the consolidated revenue, at the expense of the general taxpayer."

Since then a petition was presented to the Minister for Agriculture, asking him that the proclamation constituting a board in respect of the Isis Central Mill should be rescinded. On the 1st March of this year they sent the following to the Minister for Agriculture:—

"THE REGULATION OF SUGAR CANE PRICES ACT OF 1915.

"The Hon. the Minister for Agriculture.

"We, the undersigned cane suppliers of the Isis Central Sugar Mill Company, Limited, feel it our duty in the best interests of all parties concerned to approach you with the request that you exercise the powers necessary to secure an Order in Council for the rescission of the Isis local board (schedule, section 9) and the abolition of the constitution thereof (section 8, subsection (2)).

"In connection therewith, we desire to mention that although nominations of growers' representatives for the 1917 board were lodged, that action must not be taken as antagonistic to this petition, but simply to comply with regulation of the regulations of the above Act dated 28th January, 1916.

"In support of our petition we would urge—

1. The satisfactory co-operative system of cane payment which has always obtained at the mill.

2. The absence of dividends to shareholders.

3. The fact that all shareholders are canegrowers and only benefit by so being to the extent of the price of cane.

4. That no board can fix a more reasonable price than that being paid.

5. That we strongly object to taxation without benefit.

"In conclusion, we recommend our petition to your favourable consideration and trust that you will be impressed with the reasonableness of it, and, further, that you will see fit to accede to our requests.

"Cordalba, 1st March, 1917."

On the 22nd February of this year also a previous petition set out the following:—

"The Honourable the Minister for Agriculture.

"We, the undersigned canegrowers of the Isis Central Sugar Mill Company, Limited, hereby desire to bring before your notice their unanimous wish to be removed from the jurisdiction of the regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act of 1915, with the view of leaving undisturbed our existing agreements affecting delivery and price of cane for the unexpired period of their currency. To that end we would earnestly request you to exercise the powers conferred upon you by subsection (2) of section 15 of the above-mentioned Act, whereby the 'Minister' may exempt any contracts of agreements from this subsection.

"In urging this petition it is only necessary for us to state that all shareholders of this company are canegrowers, and that all cane suppliers (shareholders and non-shareholders) participate on equal terms, as to the price of cane, in all money left after the expenses of the mill have been paid for the season. If further proof was required to show the fair and equitable nature of our agreements, we might mention that His Honour, Justice O'Sullivan, chairman of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board, at the sittings of that board in Childers on 14th April, 1916, characterised the agreement as good as the growers can get.

"In conclusion, we express the hope that these agreements which have practically been in existence since the inception of the mill, and under which we have worked so amicably with the management, will be allowed to exist until they are determined through the natural effluxion of time.

"We attach herewith copies of existing agreements.

"Your petitioners therefore pray that you will be good enough to give effect to their request."

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: What agreements are those?

HON. C. F. NIELSON: The agreements made between the Isis Central Mill and their suppliers, which were attached to the petition sent to the Minister for Agriculture, and these agreements were characterised by Judge O'Sullivan as being as good as the growers could get. He (Mr. Nielson) appeared before the board on that occasion for the Isis Central Mill, and heard His Honour make that remark. They said in their petition that no board could give them any more money, because after all the expenses had been paid for the season, the money left was paid over to the suppliers, irrespective of whether they were shareholders or non-shareholders in the mill.

HON. F. COURTICE: The representatives on the board must have been in sympathy with the central mill, and there could be no harm.

HON. C. F. NIELSON: There was no harm, but the local board had to go through the farce of meeting in Childers two growers elected by the suppliers of the mill and two directors of the mill who were selected by the people who appointed the representa-

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tives, with the exception that the outside suppliers helped to select the directors. These four people had to go into Childers once a year and get the police magistrate to sit at the court house, as a matter of form, and confirm the agreement that existed before any board was thought of, and which agreement still operated.

HON. F. COURTICE: That is not much trouble.

HON. C. F. NIELSON: It was not a question of trouble; it was a farce. If the people at this central mill did not want this legislation why should they have it? A grower in the Childers district where he could get a 2-foot railway communication into the railway yards at the Isis Central Mill, Cordalba, would be on the same footing as the Isis Central Mill Company's own suppliers. But when a new district was opened up—Booyal and Dallarnil—they had never had any railway cane in the yard of this mill. Speaking from memory, they showed the board that several thousand pounds had to be spent in the mill yard in order to handle cane which came on Government railway trucks, the whole of the system previously being the 2-foot gauge line. The men in this new district agreed that if the mill would alter their yards in order to take cane from Government trucks they would enter into an agreement and pay their own freight from Dallarnil or Booyal to the central mill. That was a fair and square deal. To receive goods at the carrier they had to rearrange their railway yards with 3 feet 6 inches sidings in order to handle cane that came by the 3 feet 6 inches line. These growers were paying the rate that the Railway Commissioner charged them. The system at the Isis Central Mill was to pay for cane delivered on trucks. Once the cane was on the central mill's truck on their railway line, the price was the same irrespective of the distance it had to be hauled. Whether they were paying too much or too little was beside the question; the point was that they made an agreement which was still current, and the chairman of the Central Board had told them that the agreement gave them as much as they could possibly get. Therefore, there was no occasion in the case of that particular mill to have any board.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Would they be subject to the twopenny levy?

HON. C. F. NIELSON: Yes, they were subject to the twopenny levy. In one of the petitions they asked to be allowed to get out of that, and Mr. Hodge, one of their directors who came down here last year, pointed out that they looked upon it as an injustice to have to pay for something which was of no benefit to them. The secretary of the Isis Central Mill Company had written to him (Mr. Nielson) on the 18th September last as follows:—

"On behalf of the Isis Central Mill growers I am instructed to ask you to be good enough to present their views on the Regulations of Sugar Cane Prices Act Amendment Bill before the Honourable the Legislative Council, as follows:—

We are sugar-cane growers, and, as such, are interested in, and will be affected by, the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act Amendment Bill. We therefore respectfully ask that the

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Legislative Council will amend the said Bill by inserting a provision permitting a majority of cane suppliers to any mill to say whether a cane prices board should be established for the mill they supply cane, and should no board be applied for no assessment to be levied.

"Our opposition to the Cane Prices Act and our reasons therefor were put before the Select Committee of the Legislative Council in December last by our representative (Mr. R. Hodge), and since then we have learned nothing to cause us to change our views. On the contrary, the publication of the debit balances on the season's working of the Bauple, Gin Gin, and Proserpine mills have confirmed our statement that a cane prices board cannot pay more than our product brings. We would respectfully submit for your consideration the evidence tendered and the correspondence read by our representative before the Select Committee of the Council, vide report of proceedings and minutes of evidence, pages 34, 35, 36, 37, and 38 on 15th January, 1917.

"Since then we have approached the Minister for Agriculture by letters (two) on 12th January, 1917, embodying resolutions passed by us. Copies of these were sent to the Honourable the Chairman of Committees, Legislative Council, on 15th January. Further, we petitioned the Minister for Agriculture on 22nd February and 1st March, 1917, asking to be removed from the jurisdiction of the Act, or for the rescission of the Isis local board and the abolition of the constitution thereof. Copies of these are herewith enclosed.

"We deem it unnecessary to again put our opposition in the form of a petition, and trust that, looking at the reasonableness of our arguments, this resolution will be sufficient to obtain the relief we seek.

"For and on behalf of the Isis Central Mill Cane Growers' Association.

"J. A. ROBERTSON,
"Secretary."

They petitioned the Minister. They said that they did not want the local board at all, and they did not make use of it except according to the law, when they had to meet once a year as a matter of form and affirm the agreements that existed. They had petitioned the Minister to exercise the powers he had under the principal Act and rescind the order constituting the local board, but the Minister refused to do so. They now asked the Legislative Council to pass an amendment to take the local board out of the Act altogether. On the 4th September last the growers wrote to Colonel Rankin, the member for the district, and they sent him (Mr. Nielson) a copy of the letter. Colonel Rankin replied to that letter as follows:—

"Brisbane, 4th September, 1917.

"The Secretary,

"Isis Central Mill Company, Childers.

"Dear Sir,—I am in receipt of your wire of even date, as follows:—

'Isis Central Sugar Mill Company ask you present following amendment to schedule Cane Prices Act, subsection one (1)—Repeal word 'twenty' (20) and

insert words 'a majority of the growers and should no board be applied for no levy to be made.'

"Under separate cover I am forwarding you a copy of the amending Bill, together with a copy of my proposed amendments thereon. From the latter you will observe that I have increased the number required in case of appeal to 'one-third of the growers,' and having done so, cannot very well change it to a larger proportion. I do not think, having fixed this proportion in the case of an appeal, I can justify a higher proportion in the original application for a board.

"So that your amendment may come before the House, I propose asking some other member to move it, seeing that I cannot very well do it myself, in the face of my own proposal.

"I do not think it matters very much, as I understand the Government are not likely to accept any amendment on this head.

"With reference to the Government levy, I will try to get an amendment in relieving farmers and millers from this tax in cases where no board is applied for.

"Yours very truly,

"COLIN D. W. RANKIN."

Nothing further was done in that direction, and they wrote to Colonel Rankin again on the 18th September.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Does Colonel Rankin support this amendment?

HON. C. F. NIELSON: I did not know if Colonel Rankin supported the amendment, but he said that he had given notice of other amendments which were in conflict, and he would get another member to move that amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I think Colonel Rankin knows enough about the sugar industry to move amendments in another place, and if he were in favour of this amendment he would have moved it.

HON. F. COURTICE: Colonel Rankin ought to know the district, and he ought to know the feelings of his own constituents.

HON. C. F. NIELSON: Colonel Rankin was the champion lobbyist in the Council in the absence of Mr. Bunworth of Mackay, and was the only man who could influence the Hon. T. C. Beirne. On the 10th November, twelve days ago, he received a letter from the Cane Growers' Association in the Childers district. The letter contained the following extract:—

"My association asked our member to move these amendments when the Bill was before the Assembly, but he remained silent on them."

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That shows he was not in favour of it.

HON. C. F. NIELSON: Here is another extract—

"As a result, many growers are feeling aggrieved at being thus ignored, and don't be surprised if another candidate is run in his place at the next elections."

HON. T. M. HALL: Don't talk about a man when he is not here to defend himself. You will not gain any friends that way.

HON. C. F. NIELSON: There was no unanimity in the Burrum electorate in the matter. There were about 200 cane growers in the Burrum electorate.

HON. T. M. HALL: What has this got to do with the amendment? You are only wasting time.

HON. C. F. NIELSON: He was striving to show the desires of a body of people in relation to their own business, and the Act in force did not give the people the control of their own business. The suppliers to the Isis Central Mill were satisfied to go along without a local board.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: How many people want to abolish the local board?

HON. C. F. NIELSON: Mr. Hodge, in his evidence last year, said that 90 per cent. of the growers were in favour of the abolition of the board. The Mossman Central Mill were unanimously in favour of its abolition. Senator Crawford and the mill he was connected with were in favour of its abolition. The Mulgrave Central Mill were unanimously in favour of the abolition of the local board, because at the annual meeting held in January the chairman (Mr. A. J. Draper) gave that as the opinion of the Mulgrave Mill.

HON. A. J. THYNNE: Is this long speech necessary to get this matter settled?

HON. C. F. NIELSON: The Plane Creek Mill growers were in favour of the abolition of the local board.

HON. F. COURTICE: They are not unanimous.

HON. C. F. NIELSON: Ninety per cent. of the suppliers to Plane Creek Mill wanted to abolish the local board, and deputations of growers waited on the Premier asking that the local board be excluded from the Act.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: He was not going to take as long in opposing the amendment as the Hon. Mr. Neilson had taken in arguing in favour of it. The definition of "owner of a mill" [8.30 p.m.] in the principal Act was clear.

The Bill was introduced with the intention of assisting the sugar-grower; at the same time it did not deal unfairly with any person in any other branch of the industry. The commonsense view was that it would be very unfair to have an Act that would apply to some mills and not apply to others. What was wanted in their laws was uniformity.

HON. A. A. DAVEY: What virtue is there in uniformity? If everybody is satisfied with things as they are, why bring them under the Act?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Would it not be wrong if some shops were made to close at the time fixed in the Factories and Shops Act, and others were at liberty to close when they pleased? The Act should apply to every mill operating in the State.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: What about uniform 6 o'clock closing then?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It would be quite unfair if one hotelkeeper was allowed to keep his hotel open until 11 o'clock while another had to close at 6 o'clock. If the law said that they should close at 6 o'clock, then all should close at

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6 o'clock. It was on record that the grower supplying the Plane Creek Mill—one of the mills the hon. member wished to eliminate from the operation of the Act—had sued the mill for a breach of an award, and he had succeeded. That was proof that the growers were not getting a fair share of the profits.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: That one grower was not, perhaps.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: At all events, it proved that there was some dissatisfaction. The Bill was introduced to rectify any mistakes that might have been made in the past, and any anomalies that might exist. There should be uniformity, and he urged the Committee not to accept the amendment.

HON. P. J. LEAHY said he did not wish at that stage either to support or oppose the amendment. He rose because he considered it his duty to read certain telegrams which he had received—two of them about a week ago, and the other that day. One was from Mr. Crees, the secretary of the Mossman Central Mill, and read—

"Growers supplying Mossman Central Mill are not subject any award they therefore request you move amendment Cane Price Boards Bill exempting them from payment any levy."

The next was from the Mulgrave Central Mill—

"Growers supplying Mulgrave Central Mill are not subject any award they therefore request you move amendment Cane Price Boards Bill exempting them from payment any levy."

The third was from Cairns, also from the Mulgrave Mill, and read—

"Mulgrave Mill farmers who have no use for Cane Price Boards strongly urge that you endeavour have central mills excluded from interference under Cane Price Act. Mulgrave has met all Government obligations since inception distributes last shilling to farmers and we all consider any interference by Government unnecessary and uncalled for."

He was willing to hear anything else that might be said on the matter before he voted on the amendment.

HON. A. J. THYNNE: If those mills had proved satisfactory in their working and were able to conduct their business without the aid of cane price boards or any other interference, seeing they were conducted entirely on co-operative lines, why should Parliament interfere? The best thing was to let them conduct their business without Government interference, unless it was absolutely necessary. He hoped the amendment would be carried.

HON. F. COURTICE hoped the Committee would not accept the amendment for the reason that, if twenty growers supplying a central mill applied for a board, the whole of the growers supplying the mill had to elect two representatives to the local board, and those two representatives met the two representatives of the directors of the mill. If the position with respect to the Isis Central Mill was as the Hon. Mr. Nielson had stated, and a large majority of the growers

did not want either a local board or the Central Board, there should be no difficulty in coming to an arrangement that was satisfactory to the mill. If the growers had their own representatives on the board, and they met the mill directors, the only difficulty was the payment of the levy that was necessary for the upkeep of the Central Board. The very fact that twenty growers had applied for a board and that a board was created was evidence that the growers were not unanimous on the subject. The fact mentioned by the Minister that one grower had sued the Plane Creek Mill for a breach of the award, and had been successful, also showed clearly that a number of growers wanted this legislation to apply to those mills, and he urged hon. members not to accept the amendment. The Hon. Mr. Nielson had admitted that he had confidence that the Central Board would not do anything to jeopardise the interest of the mills, but would give a fair deal to millers and growers alike. He appealed to hon. members to vote against the amendment.

HON. T. C. BEIRNE: In addition to the reasons already given why they should not accept the amendment, there were two more reasons. Any central mill might become a proprietary mill.

HON. C. F. NIELSON: How?

HON. T. C. BEIRNE: How did Pleystowe become a proprietary mill? Out of 60,000 shares in the mill, 1,750 only were now held by four or five growers, and the rest were held by outside people.

HON. C. F. NIELSON: You are quite right, but they had a totally different constitution to these mills.

HON. T. C. BEIRNE: Another reason was that central mills bought cane from growers outside their shareholders, and surely those growers had a right to be heard. For those two reasons he asked hon. members to oppose the amendment.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: The thing that surprised him was that, if the growers, in the Isis district especially, were dissatisfied and were anxious that the amendment should be inserted, their representative in the other Chamber, Colonel Rankin—who knew the sugar industry from A to Z—had not raised his voice in the Assembly on behalf of the mill and moved this amendment. Did the Hon. Mr. Nielson mean to say that Colonel Rankin was not capable, and did not know the wishes of the growers in his district?

HON. C. F. NIELSON: I did not say that he was not capable.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: That was where the amendment should have been moved. He believed Colonel Rankin was responsible for some of the amendments that had been made in the Bill in the other Chamber.

HON. C. F. NIELSON: He said he could not move this because he had given notice of something that conflicted with it.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: What would influence his vote in the matter was the fact that the central sugar-mills, at the present time, owed the Treasurer no less

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than £178,728, and the rest of Queensland had to pay interest upon that amount. The Isis Central Mill owed nothing to the Treasurer. They had been thrifty and prosperous. They had paid themselves a small amount for their cane, and now they were nearly out of the hands of the Treasurer. That was a policy that should be very much encouraged by the present Government, who had to find the £178,728 that the other central mills were behind in their payments. They should encourage all the mills to pay off their indebtedness to the Treasurer. That was an easy way in which to get £178,000.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: We are here to look after the interests of the grower, without doing any injury to the rest of the industry.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: The Isis Central Mill was a purely co-operative mill and belonged to the growers. They had paid themselves a low price for cane, and he supposed that in two or three years the mill would belong entirely to the growers. In one case where the growers gave up all hope of ever getting the mill into their own hands because they were so deep in the mire, they were overpaid last year by the Treasury to the extent of £4,787 14s. 1d. He would read just two or three lines of strong criticism of that mill from the report of the General Manager of Central Mills. The suppliers practically said, "We cannot possibly get our mill out of the mire, as we owe some thousands of pounds," and they came along and asked for 27s. per ton for their cane. A tentative price of 23s. per ton was offered them, and they accepted it. The cane turned out to be worth 17s. 5d. per ton, and they were overpaid to the extent of £4,787. This was what the general manager said—

"It would appear, from the actions of the Bauple growers, that the majority are indifferent to the mill's obligations to the Treasury, and they spare no effort to exact every penny they can from the Treasury without putting forth much effort to increase the tonnage of cane to be supplied to the mill. The average tonnage of cane produced over a period of years is little more than one-half the mill's crushing capacity, whilst in some years little more than a one-quarter crop has been available for the mill. There is, therefore, no inducement to spend money to make the mill more efficient, as no guarantee can be obtained for a regular supply of cane from the farmers."

The Treasurer might have to lift that mill probably and take it away to South Johnstone. If the Treasurer did not want to allow those mills to get deeper and deeper into the mire of obligation, let the mills which were looking after their own interests and were prosperous manage their own affairs. As far as the Isis, the Mossman, and the Mulgrave mills were concerned, they might accept the amendment, because the shareholders of those mills appeared to be unanimous, and were managing their own affairs splendidly. With regard to the Plane Creek Mill, there was a difference of opinion, but in any case the Treasurer ought to offer every inducement to mills to repay the money they owed to the State.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: It seemed to him that if a mill received the whole of its cane from men who were shareholders in the mill, that was to say, if the mill was a co-operative mill which did not obtain any cane from any persons except the shareholders, it did not matter whether they came under the Bill or not. But if they were excluded from the Bill they would save twopence per ton on their cane, and he did not see any reason why they should not save that twopence per ton. But if there were other suppliers to the mill who were not shareholders, that was an entirely different proposition. A case of that kind he would refer to the cane prices board.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: He thought there was a large section of people in Queensland at the present time who were saying, "The Lord deliver us from legislation." Evidently there were four mills who said, "Let us alone, don't bother us, we can do our own work." Where men were honestly carrying on their own industry and were successful, and were paying the Government every penny they owed them, why should the Government interfere with them? It appeared to him that there was a good deal of electioneering touting about the whole thing. This was purely an electioneering dodge. The Government started on the labourers, and, having secured their votes, they looked round to see which was the next most numerous section whose votes they could grab, irrespective of whether it was honest, respectable, or just. If there were four mills who said they wanted to be let alone, as they could look after their own affairs, why should they force this legislation upon them? They deserved every credit for doing what they have done; they had honoured their scrap of paper; they had kept their bond, and he thought the committee would be making a mistake if they forced this legislation upon such persons. He, therefore, thought there was great merit in the amendment, and he intended to support it.

HON. A. A. DAVEY: He supported the position taken up by the Hon. Mr. O'Shea. It was a good principle that the Government should let severely alone any undertaking of a co-operative nature. It had been clearly proved that the Isis Mill did not

[9 p.m.] want to be interfered with, and that they had conducted their business in a satisfactory manner. What, then, was the object of putting this measure on them? The idea that nothing would go along satisfactory unless it was under the thumb of the Government was a mistaken idea. The Government had its iron heel on too many things in this State and other States, and the result was that they had retarded the investment of capital and the development of the country. The Government were not justified in interfering with such concerns as those that had been specially mentioned in the course of this debate. If certain growers desired to have a cane prices board, they were entitled to have it.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: To follow your argument to a logical conclusion, if certain business men want to be free from the Shops and Factories Act, they should be allowed to be free.

HON. A. A. DAVEY: If certain business men and all their employees wanted to be

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free from an Act, they should be free from it. He thought the Government was doing wrong when they interfered with the relationships between employer and employee, if they were mutually satisfied. A better spirit would prevail through all our industries if there were more of these mutual agreements between the parties who represented the two sides in an industry.

Hon. F. COURTICE interjected.

Hon. A. A. DAVEY: The hon. member was a member of a democratic party which believed in the rule of the majority. He would read a statement made in another place by a most distinguished member of the Queensland Labour party, and, perhaps, the ablest member who adorned that party. Would the hon. gentleman doubt the ability of Mr. Lesina?

Hon. F. COURTICE: I would doubt his honesty.

Hon. A. A. DAVEY: He had heard it said that he was a lot more honest than other people. There were Mr. Lesina's words on the subject of the workers' political organisation, in another place.

Hon. W. H. DEMAINE: It is not many months ago since Mr. Lesina wanted to come back to the workers' political organisation, but he was blocked. That discounts what you say.

Hon. A. A. DAVEY: Mr. Lesina said—

"He did exactly what they advised him to do. If they asked him to vote against the Bill he would vote against it, and if they asked him to vote for it, he would vote for it. A Labour man was a man who handed himself over, body and soul, to the workers' political organisation to do what they told him to do—do what they advised. He was prepared to sacrifice logic, fact, interest, public money, and everything else, and do what his workers' political organisation asked him to do."

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: He rose to a point of order. The hon. gentleman was quoting from a newspaper report a speech which had nothing whatever to do with the question before the Committee. It was quite irrelevant. They had been considerably over an hour and a-half on the one clause, and it appeared to him that the hon. gentleman who had made the quotation was simply trying to stonewall and delay the business of the Chamber.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is not in order in quoting from a newspaper report which is not relevant to the subject before the Committee.

Hon. A. A. DAVEY: He submitted that the quotation was not irrelevant, in this way—the question of political honesty was introduced, and he wanted to speak in reply to that particular interjection, and that was the reason he mentioned it. He was not stonewalling. He was perfectly in accord with the amendment, because he thought that the Government should not interfere with the growers and owners of the mills, if they were anxious to go on without interference.

Hon. T. M. HALL suggested that as this was a new clause which they had not had an opportunity of considering, it should be

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postponed for further consideration. They were delaying the passage of the measure through Committee. There were other clauses on which they could probably agree without any difficulty.

Hon. C. F. NEILSON: If the Hon. Mr. Hall desired the clause to be postponed, he was at liberty to move that the clause be postponed.

Hon. T. M. HALL: You are the mover.

Hon. C. F. NEILSON: He did not know what the object was. It was for the Minister to say whether he would postpone it. He personally had no objection. He was sorry that an innocent little amendment like this should have caused such a lot of trouble.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: He was opposed to the postponement of the amendment. It was eight or nine weeks since he introduced the Bill. He first of all postponed it in order to meet the wishes of hon. gentlemen who were interested in the sugar question, and, later on, he further postponed it until there was more information before the House in the shape of reports. He had altered the business paper on about a dozen occasions, and they were now asked to postpone the very first clause to a later stage. Hon. gentlemen could not accuse him of not meeting them in every way.

Hon. A. J. THYNNE: It is only asking to postpone the clause; we can go on with the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: There was no reason to postpone the clause as they had all made up their minds.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES objected to the Minister's statement that their minds were made up. He wanted to know whether those mills were going to pay the 2d. levy? He had not made up his mind as to whether it would be a fair thing to exempt those mills from the levy. If they passed the amendment as it stood, the mills would be exempt from the measure. It would be wise to let the clause stand over, and go on with those with which they were more familiar.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: He was never one to oppose the getting of the fullest information, but if he was a party to the postponement of the clause, it must be on the understanding that it was not to waste time or prejudice the chances of passing the Bill.

Hon. C. F. NIELSON asked whether the question before the Committee was that the clause be postponed.

The CHAIRMAN: The amendment is before the Committee.

Hon. C. F. NIELSON: The Hon. Mr. Fowles asked whether these mills would pay a levy. He did not quite understand what was meant, but he could inform the hon. gentleman that these mills had refused to pay the levy up to date.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: They can be sued.

Hon. C. F. NIELSON: Yes, but they may not be liable. He understood the Hon. Mr. Courtice had raised the question as to whether these mills purchased cane from outside suppliers. He was not in a position to say how much or how little, but prob-

ably they purchased some in each case. In the case of the Isis Mill, the proportion would be very small. In the case of the Mossman, the Mulgrave, and the Isis mills, the Treasurer held the deeds of the growers who caused the mill to be erected. Outside suppliers were getting the same price as the shareholders whose deeds were pawned to the Treasurer.

Hon. F. COURTICE: No.

HON. C. F. NIELSON: Some growers 15 or 20 miles away from the Isis Mill applied to the mill, and asked them to make provision in the mill yard to take cane by the railway, and the mill agreed. They said they would make provision which would cost £3,000 or £4,000, and give the applicants the same prices as they paid their own growers, but that the growers would have to pay their own freight to the Government, and those men signed an agreement to do that for a number of years. Where was the need to have an award for them?

Hon. F. COURTICE: What harm is there.

HON. C. F. NIELSON: It was not a question of harm, but of the convenience of the growers. Mr. Hodge, a director of the North Isis Central Mill, in giving evidence before the Select Committee, page 34, said—

“Our mill is a central mill, and every shareholder is a canegrower. Our shares are not for sale. The shares go with the land, and we have a great many non-shareholders. But, like every other central mill, our price paid for cane is the same to shareholders and non-shareholders.”

If the Hon. Mr. Beirne took the trouble to read the evidence of Mr. Hodge, on page 34 of the report of the Select Committee, he would understand the whole position. One set of growers placed their deeds with the mill and another set of growers came in and got the benefit without any risk at all, and without incurring any financial obligation. There was no reason why they should not exclude the four mills from the operation of the Act. The Hon. Mr. Fowles mentioned the Bauple Mill. The Treasurer gave the growers their deeds back and took over the Bauple Mill himself, so that the growers had no liability now and did not care whether the mill was a success or not. At the present time the Bauple Mill was in arrears to the extent of £30,000.

HON. T. C. BEIRNE suggested that the clause might be postponed, because he had received a long letter from Mr. R. Hodge, and he did not have it with him, and he would like to read it to members of the Committee.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES withdrew his opposition to the postponement of the clause and agreed to postpone it.

Clause 2 postponed accordingly.

On clause 3—“Amendment of section 4”—

HON. C. F. NIELSON moved the omission of subclause (1). At the present time the Central Board consisted of five members—namely, a judge of the District Court as chairman, a chemist appointed by the Governor in Council, an accountant appointed by the Governor in Council, a millowners' representative elected by the millowners, and a canegrowers' representative elected by the

canegrowers. Each one of those individuals had a vote on the board. Subclause (1), which he proposed to omit, provided that the accountant and chemist should not have a vote at all. That meant that the voting would be left to the chairman, the millers' representative, and the growers' representative. He considered that the chemist and the accountant should be allowed to vote, because by preventing them from voting they took away the responsibility that rested on their shoulders as members of the board. The millers' representative and the growers' representative were naturally partisans, so that really the judge became the board pure and simple. It was unwise to take away the votes of the experts.

HON. F. COURTICE did not think it would impair the efficiency of the board by taking away the voting power of the chemist and accountant, because they would still be present, and the board could take advantage of the knowledge possessed by these experts.

Hon. T. M. HALL: And they can examine them as witnesses.

HON. F. COURTICE: Yes; and both the accountant and chemist would give all the information in their possession.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: What is the objection to them voting?

HON. F. COURTICE: He had no objection to them having a vote, but if the votes were taken away from them it would not make the board inefficient.

Hon. T. J. O'SHEA: They are in the employ of the Government.

HON. F. COURTICE: Yes, they were in the employ of the Government.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: He was opposed to the amendment. As the clause stood, the system was the same as the old wages board system, where a representative from each side and a chairman decided on various awards. If they passed the clause as it stood in the Bill it would mean that the voting would be confined to the millers' representative, the growers' representative, and the chairman. He could not see anything fairer than that. They would have an opportunity of getting advice and information if they wanted it. He did not see why the chemist and accountant should have a vote on the board.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES suggested that the Hon. Mr. Nielson might allow the amendment to go on the voices. The Government had got two appointees on the board, and they proposed to take the votes away from them. He could not understand why the Government brought up the matter at all. The amendment was not a material alteration. He pointed out that they had to be careful not to allow any material alteration in the Bill, because it might be blocked in another quarter. If the agreement with the Federal Government were broken then they might lose the £21 per ton for sugar. He asked the Minister if he had the papers he had asked for the other day.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Yes, they are all here.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: He would like to know the reason the Government had for

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introducing the amendment. There was no vital principle involved in the matter, and there had been no reason put forth by the Minister to justify the amendment. One thing that made him feel inclined to vote for the amendment was because the Government were at fault in appointing as judicial officers on the board two public servants. That was highly improper. Members of the board should be independent of the Government or anyone else, and should be able to exercise their judicial powers uncontrolled, unguided, and unguarded. How could men under the daily direction of a Minister act in an independent way on the board? They would be something more than the ordinary public servants if they could do that.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES pointed out that the chemist and accountant occupied positions that were purely advisory, and there was no necessity for them to have a vote.

HON. C. F. NIELSON: Section 4 of the principal Act stated—

“A Central Sugar-cane Prices Board shall be constituted by the Governor in Council for the purposes of this Act.

“The Central Board shall consist of five members.”

Then it set out who the members were—

“A District Court judge, who shall be the chairman, a canegrowers' representative, a millowners' representative, a qualified sugar chemist, and a person experienced in accountancy and audit.”

HON. T. C. BEIRNE: He might be the chemist of one of the mills.

HON. C. F. NIELSON: The chemist is gazetted by the Governor in Council as a member of the Central Cane Price Board, and, so far as he knew, he received a salary of £600 per annum for the position, and was employed by nobody else. If, as the Minister stated, he was only there in an advisory capacity, the Bill was not complete, because the principal Act provided that the board should consist of five members. If two of the members of the board were only advisers, they were not really members of the board.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: And they ought not to be.

HON. C. F. NIELSON: He agreed with the hon. member.

HON. T. M. HALL: Then, why do you want to put them in again?

HON. C. F. NIELSON: He wanted to leave them where they were. He was not responsible for the Bill or for the principal Act, he was only responsible for his amendments. If those two members of the board were only to be there in an advisory capacity, then section 4 of the principal Act should be amended to say that the board was to consist of three members only. The principal Act and the Bill made provision for the appointment of valuers, chemists, and other officers, and these two should be appointed as advisers of the board. If they were to continue as members of the board, then they should be placed on an equal footing with the other members of the board, otherwise the number of members should be reduced to three. No reason had been

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given for the change, and it was the duty of the Minister to explain why the alteration in status was proposed.

HON. T. M. HALL: It seemed to him that they were beating the air in connection with the question. If the board was to consist of a chairman, two growers, and two millers, they would arrive at the same conclusion as if they had a chairman, one grower, and one miller. It was quite a common thing in connection with the management of a big concern for the secretary, the accountant, and the manager of the business to be present at board meetings for consultative purposes, but they had no votes. If the board wanted information upon any question connected with finance, reference was made to the accountant. If information was required in connection with some technical point, reference was made to the manager. In the same way the chemist and the accountant should be present to give advice to the Central Board.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: Would they be members of the board then?

HON. T. M. HALL: He did not know whether they would. That was a legal technicality, and they could leave the Government to get out of their difficulties as best they could. If they had a judge as chairman and one member to represent the growers and another member to represent the millers, that was all that was required.

Amendment (*Mr. Nielson's*) put and negatived.

HON. C. F. NIELSON moved the omission, on line 21, of the word “five,” with a view to inserting the word “twenty.” The amendment would increase the minimum area entitling a canegrower to a vote from 5 acres to 20 acres. Five acres was too small an area to entitle a man to be regarded as a canegrower. They should fix the minimum at some reasonable living area. There were subsequent amendments of which notice had been given in which the area was put at 20 acres, and it was desirable to have uniformity.

HON. R. BEDFORD: There are 100 growers at the Proserpine alone with not more than 5 acres

HON. C. F. NIELSON: Yes, and he gave a table the other night showing that the mills with the largest number of growers with small areas were the least successful.

HON. R. BEDFORD: Therefore, the small men should have no say in the control of the mill

HON. C. F. NIELSON: The industry was of more importance than the small grower or the big grower; than the small mill or the big mill. The amendment was agreed to last year, and no reason had been given why it should be altered.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: The statement that the amendment was necessary to bring it into line with something that was to come later did not impress him in the slightest. He wanted to deal with the amendment from the point of view of whether it was right or wrong, and, having decided that, he was prepared then to make other things fit in with it. There must be some limit to the area cultivated. It was quite conceivable

that 5 acres might be too small, because a man could not make a living from 5 acres of cane. On the other hand, he thought 20 acres was too large a minimum, and he would suggest 10 acres as a reasonable compromise.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: He hoped the amendment would not be accepted. He did not think there was any need to compromise on the matter. Why should they disfranchise a man who only grew 5 acres? A man might start as a cane farmer with 5 acres, and he should be given an opportunity of voting. He hoped the Committee would stand by the clause as it was.

Question—That the word proposed to be omitted (*Mr. Nielson's amendment*) stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided:—

CONTENTS, 14.

Hon. R. Bedford	Hon. H. Llewelyn
" T. C. Beirne	" L. McDonald
" F. Courtice	" F. McDonnell
" W. R. Crampton	" T. Nevitt
" W. H. Demaine	" I. Perel
" A. J. Jones	" E. B. Purnell
" H. C. Jones	" W. J. Riordan

Teller: Hon. R. Bedford.

NOT-CONTENTS, 17.

Hon. G. S. Curtis	Hon. C. F. Marks
" A. A. Davey	" C. F. Nielson
" B. Fahey	" T. J. O'Shea
" E. W. H. Fowles	" A. H. Parnell
" A. Gibson	" W. Stephens
" G. W. Gray	" A. J. Thynne
" T. M. Hall	" H. Turner
" J. Hodel	" A. H. Whittingham
" P. J. Leahy	

Teller: Hon. A. A. Davey.

Resolved in the negative.

Question stated—That the word "twenty" be inserted.

HON. P. J. LEAHY moved that the word "ten," instead of the word "twenty," be inserted.

Hon. C. F. NIELSON: I will agree to that.

Amendment (*Hon. Mr. Leahy's*) agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

On clause 4—"Amendment of section 5"—

HON. C. F. NIELSON moved that sub-clause (2), lines 18 to 42, be omitted. This matter was very fully debated in another place, and it was also fully debated in the Council on a previous occasion. He could assure the Committee that the provision was not in any sense in favour of the growers of sugar-cane. As a rule, if there was frosted cane in a district, it was general, and if one mill was working and another mill was not working, they might be certain that the mill which was in operation was working with frosted cane. If other growers were to be allowed to come along with their frosted cane, they could only have it crushed at the expense of the growers who were supplying the mill. The mill could only crush so many tons of cane per day,

and it did not matter to the millowners by whom the cane was supplied. But this provision was an innovation, which said that anybody could come along with damaged cane, and upset the whole arrangements of a mill that was working. The other damaged cane of any consequence was burnt cane, and it was well known that millers endeavoured to make arrangements to meet the needs of those whose cane had been burnt. But this provision would take the management of the mill out of the hands of the millowners, as under it growers could bring any quantity of cane to the mill, and the proprietors would be bound to accept delivery of the cane and crush it. It was not a sensible provision, and was more likely to injure the grower than anything else.

HON. A. J. THYNNE asked if the Hon. Mr. Nielson intended to omit lines 41 and 42, which were part of subclause (2).

HON. C. F. NIELSON: No; his amendment should be to omit all the lines from line 18 down to line 40.

HON. F. COURTICE: This was a very necessary provision to have in the Bill. He did not agree with the statement of the Hon. Mr. Nielson that when frost occurred it was general. This year frosts in the Bundaberg district were patchy. The Hon. Mr. Nielson knew that in one part of the district there was frost nearly every year, while in the locality where his farm was situated there was seldom any frost. He did not suggest that growers should be allowed to bring in frosted cane just as they liked, but thought that the chairman of the Central Board or the chairman of the local board might be allowed to arrange the matter. If cane damaged in this way was treated rapidly, the deterioration would be very little, but if it was left too long the deterioration would be serious.

HON. B. FAHEY: How long would it take to deteriorate seriously?

HON. F. COURTICE: It all depends upon how it was frost-bitten, but where frost was followed by rain it would deteriorate more quickly. Frosts generally occurred in the months of June and July, when growers whose cane was not touched were not anxious to cut their cane, as cane cut at that period did not give such a good return. He trusted that the Committee would be guided by common sense in this matter, and that they would allow the provision to remain in the clause.

HON. A. GIBSON: He was rather surprised at the last speaker making the statement he did. He had seen hundreds of acres of frosted cane which had to wait for three or four months before it was crushed. They could not take frosted cane to a mill 20 or 30 miles distant, as that would mean a serious increase in the cost of haulage. If a mill had to take cane of a density of 7 per cent. of commercial sugar, they would require 16 or 18 tons of cane for a ton of sugar, while 9 tons of ordinary cane made a ton of sugar, and it was undesirable that those two classes of cane should be mixed.

HON. A. J. THYNNE: Was there any reason why, if a man's own mill was work-

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ing, he should not send his cane to that mill, and was there any reason why, if his own mill was not working, he should not be free to send it to some other mill? He understood the Hon. Mr. Gibson to say that [10 p.m.] there might be hundreds of tons of cane to be treated, and it would be a serious matter to have that quantity of cane sent to some other mill; but, if the mill was not working, was it a fair thing to deprive a man who had had his cane frosted from sending it to another mill where he would have an opportunity of having it treated?

HON. C. F. NIELSON said the clause gave a grower the right, without any limitation of quantity to send his cane to a mill to which there might be nothing but frosted cane coming in from men whose lands were assigned to that particular mill. The clause allowed a stranger to go to the mill with all his valueless cane, and said that the mill was to receive it, but they could only do that at the expense of their own growers. This clause was detrimental to the interests of the growers. He had seen hundreds and thousands of acres frosted; not a bit of a farm, but the whole country white from one end to the other. If one mill happened to start before another, why should the growers of the mill which was not ready be able to rush their cane to the mill which was started without any restriction as to the quantity, and that mill have to tell its own suppliers that they must stop because the frosted cane had to be taken from the other suppliers? The frost was not like a fire. A fire might cause a big loss to two or three, but it was confined to a small area, while a frost was often quite general through the whole district. They had been frosted from the eastern side of the Woongarra Scrub up to Gin Gin, a direct line of 40 miles; every field was frosted with the exception of a few elevated places. If the clause was in the interests of anybody it was in the interests of the canegrower whose mill had not started. If his mill had started he would be given an allotted quantity with his neighbours; but, if he had the facility to get his cane harvested quickly, he could load a train and send it down to another mill, which must take it and stop their own supporters. The suggestion of the Hon. Mr. Courtice that the quantity should be restricted as the Central Board might decide was partly a way out of the difficulty; but you had to look at it from the point of view that it was not in the interests of the other growers.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: The reasons given by the Hon. Mr. Nielson might be a justification for some amendment in the subclause, but not for striking it out altogether. A simple amendment could be made to get over the difficulty.

HON. C. F. NIELSON: I have suggested an amendment.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA was in sympathy with Mr. Nielson's contention, but the object in view could be carried out by amending the clause rather than by deleting it, so as to protect the growers attached to a mill from being injured because some outsider wished to rush in ahead of them. The subclause read—

“Provided that any canegrower shall be at liberty to deliver any of his

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frosted or damaged sugar-cane to any mill which is crushing sugar-cane.”

He would interpolate there the words—

“if the mill to which his lands are assigned is not then working.”

That would get over the difficulty; but the other half was serious in regard to crowding out men who were attached to the mill. The Minister might postpone the clause.

HON. A. J. THYNNE suggested that part of the clause should remain. It might be read—

“That any canegrower whose mill is not crushing shall be at liberty to deliver any of his frosted or damaged sugar-cane, whether such canegrower's lands are assigned to that mill or not.”

Give the grower power to supply to anybody else, but not the power to compel a mill to take his cane in preference to its own suppliers. Leave it open to the nearest mill as to what quantity, if any, it would take.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: A good deal of thought had been given to the clause, and the intention of the Government was to give every grower an opportunity to get his frosted cane off. It would be advantageous to the grower to get his frosted cane crushed as quickly as possible, and it should be advantageous to the miller to get it as soon as possible, rather than to get it in a decomposed state. The grower had to grow cane for the miller, who depended upon the quantity he was growing. The first amendment on clause 2 was postponed, and there was no harm in postponing the consideration of this clause, and, if it would facilitate business, he would agree to postpone it. Still they could not go on postponing clauses, else they would never get through.

HON. C. F. NIELSON suggested another proviso after line 27—

“Provided that the Central Board shall first have directed the mill or mills to which and in what quantities such cane may be so delivered.”

It must not be left to any grower to rush his cane to any mill he liked or in any quantity he liked.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: Make him go to his own mill.

HON. A. GIBSON pointed out that some cane went from 14 tons to 18 tons of cane to the ton of sugar. He would have to pay the freight on that 18 tons of cane and crush 18 tons of cane and use all that heavy quantity of water in the mill. He had to run the rollers and do everything else, and use up his firewood. If the Central Board compelled him to pay the price they laid down, it would mean that he would have to pay 12s. or 14s. per ton for cane giving only 8 per cent. of sugar content. If he had to do that it would mean that he would have to run his mill at a loss. There were certain growers who supplied sugar-cane to the mill all the year round, and they should be given the preference. Some of the growers at Bingera had been supplying the mill for thirty years. He was prepared to meet any of the growers on fair terms. On the 1st of July the mill knew what sugar they had to start

on, and it was not right that another man should rush his cane up from another area altogether.

HON. C. F. NIELSON: If a big fire takes place, all the mills come to the assistance of the owner of the cane.

HON. I. PEREL: The only information he had gleaned about the sugar business was what he learned in Bundaberg twenty years ago. He lived in Bundaberg for six years, and saw many of the evils that the planters had to contend with in those days. As laymen, it was their duty to do the best they could for the industry as a whole, and if they did not know much about the industry themselves, they should listen to those who were engaged in the industry. He listened to the Hon. Mr. Courtice, and noticed all he said. That hon. member was a practical man, and had been complimented by the judge, who was the chairman of a Royal Commission, on his knowledge of the industry. They also had suggestions from the Hon. Mr. Gibson, who was a millowner.

HON. A. GIBSON: And a grower.

HON. I. PEREL: The Hon. Mr. Gibson was a very reputable man in the business, and had a very high reputation in Bundaberg in his (Mr. Perel's) day. The Hon. Mr. Nielson had been a grower at one time, and was now in the legal profession. He had previously crushed cane, and he was now crushing clients.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: You have no right to say that.

HON. I. PEREL: He did not feel inclined to listen to what the Hon. Mr. Nielson said. The Hon. Mr. Gibson made a remark that, as a miller, he would not care about crushing frosted cane when he could get good cane.

HON. A. GIBSON: I did not put it that way.

HON. I. PEREL: Fifty growers might send cane to a mill, and the mill might make a profit out of fifteen, therefore the thirty-five men had to suffer for the fifteen. The millowner preferred to see the little man ruined rather than lose his profits by crushing unprofitable cane. The Hon. Mr. Nielson made a remark that the whole of one district was frosted on one occasion. He had seen patches here and there frosted himself, but not the whole district. If the whole district were frosted there would be no need for the mills to give preference to anyone. In a Bill of that sort they had to do what was best for the State, and he thought the matter could be arranged by the board.

HON. C. F. NIELSON: The board cannot arrange it. We propose to let the board regulate it.

HON. I. PEREL: The members of the other place who represented the sugar districts knew more about the matter than members of the Council, and he preferred to take their views on the matter. They had taken some time in formulating the Bill, and he preferred to agree with the Bill as it stood. This was a very dangerous measure for them to touch. He desired [10.30 p.m.] more information on the subject.

He was interested at one time in the sugar industry, and he then thought that the millers were a bad lot of people, and that they imposed on the unfortunate grower. He had heard the explanation offered by the Hon. Mr. Gibson and he had also heard

the Hon. Mr. Courtice, and his view was that it would not be right for a layman like himself to come to a decision on the matter until he heard more about it. He knew that it only happened very rarely that the cane over a very large area was frosted.

HON. A. GIBSON: It might happen every year.

HON. I. PEREL: He was sure that, if the Hon. Mr. Courtice and other hon. members who were interested in the business would come together and agree what amendments would be satisfactory to them, the decision they came to would be satisfactory to a majority of hon. members.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: He thought they should deal with that clause before they rose, as they had done comparatively nothing. He did not propose to accept the amendment. He had expressed his willingness more than half an hour before to allow the clause to be postponed, but his suggestion was not accepted. They were only on clause 4 now, and only one small amendment had been agreed to. Every question that had come before the Committee had been postponed for further consideration.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: Why didn't you bring the Bill on three months ago when we were doing nothing?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The Bill had been before the Council for nine weeks, and it was not his fault that it had not been proceeded with sooner.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: He sympathised with the Minister to some extent. He did not think they had done the amount of work that they ought to have done, but many hon. members were just as anxious to finish the Bill as the Minister. He felt satisfied that, if they adjourned now in conformity with the arrangement made some time ago, more progress would be made to-morrow. He was sure that there was no desire to defeat the Bill; the majority of hon. members would not tolerate that, and there was no reason why they should not finish the Bill to-morrow. He suggested that the Minister might now get the Chairman to report progress.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: On the distinct understanding that they would finish the Bill to-morrow, he would move the Chairman out of the chair.

The Council resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported progress, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I beg to move—That the Council do now adjourn. The business to-morrow will be the third reading of the Closer Settlement Act Amendment Bill, the continuation of the Committee stage of the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act Amendment Bill, and the second reading of the Chillagoe and Etheridge Railways Bill, and the State Iron and Steel Works Bill in Committee.

Question put and passed.

The Council adjourned at twenty minutes to 11 o'clock.

Hon. A. J. Jones.]

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

THURSDAY, 22 NOVEMBER, 1917.

The SPEAKER (Hon. W. McCormack, Cairns) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

QUESTIONS.

DIPPING OF TRAVELLING STOCK.

Mr. SOMERSET (*Stanley*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

"1. What dipping instructions, if any, are issued by the Chief Inspector of Stock to his inspectors, relative to the passage of stock from coastal districts to clean areas on the Downs?"

"2. In the event of two dippings being ordered for travelling stock, is any specific interval allowed between dippings, and, if so, what period?"

"3. Does the department insist on the insertion in waybills of all brands imprinted on travelling stock?"

"4. If so, and in view of the impossibility of securing these particulars during the winter months when the hair of stock is long, will the department in future insist only on the entry of the last brand in the waybill?"

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. Lennon, *Herbert*) replied—

"1. At least two dippings in an approved dipping fluid, with a minimum of seven days' interval between the dippings, and the animals to be found free from ticks on crush inspection at the last dipping.

"2. Yes; seven to fourteen days.

"3. Yes.

"4. If stockowners observed the provisions of the Brands Act of 1915 and regulations relative to the use of second or subsequent brands, the insertion of the last brand would be sufficient."

*DEPRECIATION CHARGES ON SUGAR-MILLS.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*) asked the Treasurer—

"Will he inform the House as to the disposal of the amounts appearing as depreciation charges in the annual balance-sheets of the sugar-mills under his control?"

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*) replied—

"The amounts are credited to the trust accounts of the mills."

PUBLIC WORKS LAND RESUMPTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

THIRD READING.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. J. M. Hunter, *Maranoa*), this Bill was read a third time, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence by message in the usual form.

[Hon. J. M. Hunter.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL—STATE CHILDREN ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READINGS.

On the motion of the PREMIER (Hon. T. J. Ryan, *Barcoo*), these Bills were read a third time, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence by messages in the usual form.

MILITARY CENSORSHIP.

The PREMIER (who was received with Government "Hear hears!") in moving—

"That this House emphatically protests against the manner in which the censorship is being abused to suppress reports of the views of those opposing the Commonwealth Government's conscription proposals, and condemns it as an unwarrantable interference with the rights of free discussion on the platform, and in the Press, upon one of the gravest issues ever submitted to the public, and a flagrant infringement of the time-honoured rights of a free people,"

said: I feel certain that I will be expressing the views of hon. members by expressing the pleasure and gratification which we all must have felt at reading the very pleasing war news that has appeared in the Press this afternoon. I only hope that the news may be confirmed.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: It is certainly a very complete answer to the recent successes which the enemy have achieved, particularly on the Italian front. I hope that it may be confirmed, and that it may be followed up by even greater successes. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. MACARTNEY: I suppose we can believe you.

The PREMIER: An interjection like that I could only expect from the hon. member who has made it. It shows up his character in a splendid light before this House and before the country. I prefer to think that he is only joking in making such an interjection.

In addressing myself to the motion before the House, I regard the matter that we are about to discuss as one of the very greatest importance—(hear, hear!)—and I have a full sense of the responsibility that I am taking upon my shoulders in discussing what I consider to be such an important question. It is a question that must necessarily be discussed with moderation, owing to the nature of the subject-matter with which it deals. But nevertheless it must be dealt with fully and it must be dealt with fearlessly.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: The censorship no doubt is necessary, but it should only be purely for purposes connected with the successful carrying on of the war. (Hear, hear!) It should be utilised for the prevention of information getting to the enemy or for any other purpose that is intended for securing the public safety and the defence of the Commonwealth. In the War Precautions Act, under which the powers of the censor are utilised or operated or exercised, it is laid down as the foundation of that Act that it is for the purpose of securing the public safety and the defence of the Commonwealth. Now, anything that

is bonâ fide for the securing of the public safety and the defence of the Commonwealth no doubt is welcomed by all parties and by every member of this House. (Hear, hear!) But when these powers are used for an entirely different purpose; when they are extended to be utilised for political purposes, they are then beyond the ambit, not only of the War Precautions Act, but of the whole purpose for which the censorship is established.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I do not hesitate to say that, in my opinion, the manner in which the censorship is being exercised during this campaign in which the country is engaged at present—as to whether or not they will accept or reject the conscription proposals of the Commonwealth Government—is entirely outside the scope of the powers of the censor. (Hear, hear!) In short, in my opinion, the exercise of the powers in a manner in which they are being exercised is entirely unlawful.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Would you like a man to publish a lot of lies?

The PREMIER: I would not allow a man to publish any lies, but there is an ordinary law dealing with the publication of lies, and it is under that ordinary law that such persons should be dealt with. We have the ordinary law under the Defamation Act, and we have the provisions of the Criminal Code providing for the prosecution of persons who publish or make defamatory statements. But the censorship during this campaign is being used for the purpose of suppressing the views of those who are opposed to the conscription proposals of the Commonwealth. (Hear, hear!) The issue that is before the country is of the very gravest importance; it is a proposal to take power over the life and liberties of the people, and it is imperative that there should be the greatest freedom both in speech, and to the Press, in dealing with such an issue as that.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I know that on the Continent of Europe during certain times of the war a certain political censorship has been exercised, and I am glad to see that quite recently, on the 18th November, the "Sydney Morning Herald" had the following cable:—

"It is reported from Paris that M. Clemenceau's Government is maintaining military and diplomatic censorship, but is abolishing the political censorship. Newspapers will be free to publish all documents they obtain, and will have full liberty of criticism."

That is only as it ought to be, but, unfortunately, in Australia we have the censorship at the present time being used for the suppression of reports of the views of those who are opposed to the Commonwealth Government's proposals. Before I sit down I am certain that I will be able to give ample proof of what I say. I will not overstate my case. I would prefer on such a subject as this rather to underestimate it, but certainly the position which obtains at present is such that I do not think it can be tolerated by any British community.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: As I indicated yesterday, I made a communication to the Prime Minister on this subject, and up to the present I have received no reply from him.

During the last conscription campaign the censorship was used largely in the same direction as it is being used on this occasion. I notice by the "Sydney Bulletin" of 7th September, 1916—

"For months the Commonwealth has been under an increasingly autocratic control. The Australian public has been left in gross darkness, shut out from real knowledge of passing events, even when those events had no more bearing on the military situation than anything may be said to bear on it—on the assumption that public knowledge was dangerous, that Australia could not be trusted to form an opinion."

I quote that because I adopt the views that are therein expressed. At the outset of this campaign, Mr. Holman, the Premier of New South Wales, is reported in the "Sydney Morning Herald" of 8th November to have said—

"It will . . . be absolutely essential that all employment of the censorship as an instrument for moulding public opinion should be definitely abandoned. The appeal to the people must be accompanied by absolute freedom of discussion, by Press and on platform. The Ministry must see that this is secured if they are making an appeal for support."

I quote that as evidence that Mr. Holman was of opinion that during the last conscription campaign the censorship was being used as an instrument for the moulding of public opinion, and that it should be abandoned. I contend likewise, and I contend that it is more necessary than ever, that we should see to it that the military censorship shall not be used in the direction it is being used. I could quote many other prominent men who have expressed similar opinions. In our own community I notice that the mayor of Brisbane quite recently expressed the view that he was a thorough believer in free speech in all these important matters. I notice too that the "Brisbane Courier," in a leading article on 21st November, 1917, that had reference to this matter, said—

"The censorship has gone quite as far as it is expedient to take it. . . . The true protection is not by regulation and penalty, but superior persistence in hammering in the actual truth, and a greater confidence in public intelligence."

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I do not endorse all that is contained in that, so much as that there is a suggestion that the truth is not being used against the conscription proposal, but I do endorse the view that we should rely on the intelligence of the people. It is to the public that we are appealing for a decision, and we should not be afraid to let the public know all that is going on, all that is being said; but under the existing administration of the censorship, as I will show a little later on, they are actually preventing the public from having reports of important public utterances by public men during this particular campaign. It is all the more necessary during this campaign on account of the manner in which the question is being submitted to the public. I have no hesitation in saying that, in my opinion, the form in which this question is submitted to the people is misleading. It is calculated to give a wrong impression, and to induce

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people to vote for the proposals perhaps who do not fully understand what those proposals are. The form of the question is this—

“Are you in favour of the proposals of the Commonwealth Government for reinforcing the Australian Imperial Forces overseas?”

Now everybody is in favour of reinforcements. (Hear, hear!) We are all in favour of reinforcements, but what we are opposed to is the compulsory part of the proposal—the conscription part of the proposal. The question is put in a form that it should not be. I saw a cable from London appearing in the Press both in Sydney and Brisbane—the “Sydney Morning Herald” and the “Brisbane Courier.” This is the cable, dated 19th November, 1917—

“There are general complaints among the soldiers regarding the vagueness of the referendum question, they being asked to vote for the Government proposals, but the nature of the proposals is not disclosed. Voters are solely dependent upon fragmentary newspaper cables. The Government is urged to cable an explanatory statement.”

So that you can see that even the soldiers in England—probably the soldiers at the front—have evidently been complaining about the form in which this question is being put, and consequently that cable is being sent to Australia. Our experience on a previous occasion will lead us to the conclusion that the present Commonwealth Government are not likely to furnish the soldiers at the front with information except such as is calculated to bring the soldiers to the conclusion that the Commonwealth proposals are sound.

Mr. MACARTNEY: You have a representative with the soldiers.

The PREMIER: We have not a representative with the soldiers. The representatives we have with the soldiers are tens of thousands of unionists and workers who have left this country to fight for the great cause in which we are engaged.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: If that is what the hon. member means by representatives, we have tens of thousands of representatives, and I think that the vote on the 20th December, or whenever it is taken, will sufficiently show that we have many representatives at the front.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: Notwithstanding that the Commonwealth Government may not be disposed to send sufficient information to the front to enable the soldiers to arrive at a conclusion as to what the real proposals are, nevertheless their experience of the previous referendum, and of the manner in which information was conveyed with regard to the recent Commonwealth elections in May, 1917, will make them wide awake to the manner in which the present Commonwealth Government are inclined to put information before them.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Are you referring to the cable from Dublin?

The PREMIER: The Sydney “Bulletin” of 5th July, 1917, referring to the “Anzac Bulletin,” has this to say with regard to the late Commonwealth elections—

“The ‘Anzac Bulletin’ is issued by the High Commissioner’s Office to supply the troops with Australian news, the cost

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being borne by the Australian taxpayer. Prior to the recent elections, forty lines were given to the Labour manifesto. The ‘Phewsion’ document got three pages. Of Mr. Tudor’s appeal, 600 words were published; 2,000 words from Hughes were cabled and all were printed. Tudor’s opening speech was dismissed with a paragraph; Hughes’s was given three and a-half columns. When the ‘Anzac Bulletin’ was started, it was laid down by the Cabinet, of which Hughes was a member, that politics were to have no place in its pages. Apparently, Hughes meant the other fellow’s politics.”

Those are the view of the Sydney “Bulletin,” views which coincide with mine on that important question, and which I am sure represent the views of a very large majority of the people of Australia, who become aware of the fact with regard to that “Anzac Bulletin.” I do not care what politics a man has, if he reads those facts, he can come to no other conclusion than that the case was unfairly put, and it was put at the expense of the taxpayers of Australia. (Hear, hear!) We know that during the last campaign in October, 1916, I tried to transmit a cable to the Agent-General for Queensland, Sir Thomas Robinson, on behalf of the Anti-Conscription Campaign Committee, paid for by them, and that cable was to be transmitted by Sir Thomas Robinson to Mr. Philip Snowden, a member of the House of Commons, in order to place the contents before any Australian soldiers who might be in England. They did not return the cable to the office, and say “We cannot send it.” They said nothing about it, but some days afterwards—close to polling day—I received a cablegram from Sir Thomas Robinson to the effect he had received no cable No. 50 this month. The cable had never left Australia. It is well that the public of Queensland should be reminded that these tactics were adopted during the last campaign.

Mr. FOLEY: Shame! Shame!

The PREMIER: And it is reasonable to conclude that similar tactics are being used during this campaign, and I have specific instances, that I propose now to put before the House, with regard to the manner in which the proposed report of my remarks made in the Centennial Hall on the 19th November were treated by the censor. I do not propose to give all the illustrations of what has been cut out, but I will give some of them, and there are many others similar.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Better give them all.

Mr. BARNES: Are you going to repeat the speech?

The PREMIER: I am going to give the report that was allowed to be printed and the report as it was submitted for publication.

Mr. VOWLES: Will you give us that censored cable?

The PREMIER: I will give the censored cable too. The censored cable has already been published; it was published in the “Daily Standard” last year.

Mr. VOWLES: We do not read it.

The PREMIER: Then you ought to read it; it would improve you if you read it. (Opposition laughter.) I will take an extract

from my speech. This is the way it reads, as allowed to be published—

"Now, five divisions are 100,000 men, and since the beginning we have recruited 383,000 men in Australia. Of that number, they tell us 60,000 have not left Australia's shores. Very well, there have been only 114,000 casualties. Yet you are asked to sanction the proposal for the compulsory deportation of the single men of the country—the single men between twenty to forty-four."

That is as they allowed it to be published—an entirely different meaning from what I said. This is what was left out—

[Note.—The portions struck out by censor are indicated by the black type.]

"Very well; I put these two together, and take them from 383,000, which leaves 209,000. As five divisions are 100,000, I take them away, and 109,000 men are left for the purposes of reinforcements. So that on these figures, without any further recruiting, you could go on from twelve to sixteen months. (Loud and prolonged applause.) And, if we continue the voluntary system at the rate they say we are now doing, we would go on for over two years; able to reinforce on these numbers at the rate of 7,000 men per month."

Mr. MACARTNEY: Who was speaking then?

The PREMIER: I was speaking then, and that portion of my speech was omitted, was cut out by the censor. Now, I ask any intelligent member of this House—was the censor justified in taking out the main portion of my contention?

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Your calculations may have been all wrong.

The PREMIER: Was he justified in taking out the main portion of my contention, leaving in words that conveyed an entirely different meaning from what I said? You see the impression he leaves me making on the public. He leaves me saying this—

"Very well, there have been only 114,000 casualties. Yet you are asked to sanction the proposals for the compulsory deportation of the single men of the country."

An absolutely and entirely different statement from the statement I made, calculated to mislead the public and certainly to convey a meaning that I never intended to convey and that I never did convey.

[4 p.m.] Does anybody think for a moment that I would get up on a platform and say that because there were only 114,000 casualties, "You are asked to sanction the proposals for compulsory deportation"? No. I argued that on the numbers that had enlisted—383,000, less the casualties 114,000, less 60,000 men they told us had not left Australia, there would still be 209,000 left, and that five divisions were 100,000, leaving 109,000 for reinforcements. I said that the 109,000 could reinforce them without any further recruiting for from twelve to sixteen months. I understated it. I could have increased it. I could have told them that they were sufficient for more than twelve to sixteen months, but I did not want to overstate it; I preferred to err on the other side. And then, I continued to say that if recruiting went on at the same rate

at which we are now told it is going on, there would be a sufficient number of men recruited during those months to keep the five divisions reinforced, with the 109,000 I mentioned, for two years.

Now, Mr. Groom writes a letter which appears in to-day's "Daily Mail," bearing on this same subject, and I propose to quote it, because it proves the truth of my contention that the censor disallowed. This is what Mr. Groom writes to the paper this morning—

"To the Editor.

"Sir,—I would be glad if you would permit me to amplify a passage in the necessarily condensed report of my speech last night. I am reported as having said, 'Calculated by the casualties coming out now, in eighteen months there would not be a division of Australians fighting in France.' I referred to the statement made that there were 109,000 men available at present, in addition to the 100,000 men in the five divisions in France. I pointed out that many of the 100,000 were young men in training, and that General Birdwood and others said that 7,000 per month were necessary to keep up the full strength. I added that if reinforcements were not sent, and the casualties continued, we could not keep up the reserves, and that in eighteen months we would not have reserves for the five divisions, and that being so, we would in eighteen months not have the men to reinforce a division now fighting in France.

"Yours, etc.,

"LITTLETON E. GROOM.

"Brisbane, 21st November, 1917."

His letter proves the truth of my conclusion, and yet what I said was struck out by the censor from the report submitted! The people are not to be trusted! They are not to be allowed to get such information on such an important matter as this! Well, I quote that letter by Mr. Groom in corroboration of the truth of what I said, and I ask, "Why was that passage struck out of my speech, and why was it allowed to appear in a form in which it was never delivered?" I ask, "Are the people of Australia going to tolerate that sort of thing; are they going to allow the censorship to be used for a thing of that sort?" If I understand the spirit of fairplay of the people of Australia—and I speak entirely apart from the political beliefs they have—they will not tolerate that sort of thing.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: Now, let me take another illustration; an illustration with regard to the question to be submitted. I hope that the whole of the passages I quote may be printed in "Hansard," showing the portion that was allowed to be published and the portion that was excised, so that hon. members may be really able to distinguish what was cut out by the censor. Now, this is what I am allowed to be reported to have said on that matter—

"The question Mr. Hughes put is this—'Are you in favour of the proposal of the Commonwealth Government for reinforcing the Commonwealth forces overseas?' I don't care whether you are for 'Yes' or for 'No.' To get them to vote for reinforcements? We are all in favour of reinforcements." (Great applause.)

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This is what I did say—

“The question Mr. Hughes put is this—‘Are you in favour of the proposal of the Commonwealth Government for reinforcing the Commonwealth forces overseas?’ How misleading that question is!”

That last sentence is struck out.

“I don’t care whether you are for ‘Yes’ or for ‘No.’ But is that a fair form of question? No. And does not the Prime Minister know that the people of Australia know it is unfair; that it is intended to mislead?”

All words after “No” in the first sentence are struck out. This is also struck out—

“But not only are they misleading those in Australia, they are keeping the men at the front in the dark. Is there anything more reprehensible, more to be condemned, than the attempt on the part of your own Government to deceive the men who are fighting for you at the front? (Hear, hear!) That is what is being done by the form of the question, and I appeal to all fair-minded Australians to gauge these proposals by the way in which they are brought forward and by the manner in which the question is being asked. (Applause.)

That is all struck out. The public are not allowed to hear that from me.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Surely they did not strike out the “applause”?

The PREMIER: They struck out the whole thing. Of course, the hon. the leader of the Opposition may think that this is a laughing matter. I consider that I have never spoken in my life on a more important question than that on which I am speaking now, because here it is shown that we have a military censorship that can with a stroke of the pen strike out something that does not agree with the views of the Commonwealth Government.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. O’SULLIVAN: Prussianism.

The PREMIER: That is the fact. There is no getting away from it. I am quoting exactly as it occurred. I am not overstating it, and I am sure no one here will think that there is anything contained in what I said that could help the enemy if it were made public, that could affect the safety or welfare of the Commonwealth in any way. It is purely political.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: You have not shown that yet.

The PREMIER: Now, I will show you how the censor dealt with the statements of Senator Ware, a member of the Senate of the South African Union, who spoke on the same platform as I did. This is what he is allowed to say, according to the report—

“Senator Ware, of the Union Parliament of South Africa, said he had been instructed to forward the fraternal greetings of their comrades in South Africa. He urged them to vote against conscription.”

This is what was struck out—what was not allowed to be published in the Press; the

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public of Queensland are not allowed to hear it—

“The Canadians were only paying their soldiers until the soldiers left their shore, and then Great Britain had to bear the cost. The same thing applied in South Africa. The Imperial Government had to pay the South African volunteers. The statement that Australia was the only portion of the Empire that had not carried conscription was untrue. If it was carried, he predicted, it would be used for industrial as well as military purposes.”

They were not allowed to publish that; not allowed to publish that he said—

“The statement that Australia was the only portion of the Empire that had not carried conscription was untrue.”

Now, we know that those advocating conscription at the present time have not hesitated to say that this is the only part of the British Empire where conscription has not been adopted, and Senator Ware comes out and says that is not true, that they have not adopted conscription in South Africa. Because he contradicts what was not true, the censor strikes it out, and the public of Queensland are not to be told that South Africa has not adopted conscription. The public are told that they must believe Mr. Hughes, that Australia is the only white part of the Empire that has not adopted conscription—they must believe that. Now, I say that the man who strikes out those words—that South Africa has not adopted conscription—lies.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: He suppresses the truth. He allows a lie to go forth to the people as if it were true. If the hon. member for Toowong wishes to champion that sort of thing, he is welcome to do it. I am appealing to the intelligence of the whole people of Queensland with regard to this matter. Are they not to be allowed to hear the truth? When a responsible man like Senator Ware comes and says, “In my country, South Africa, which is part of the British Empire, they have not adopted conscription,” it may not be published; but when Mr. Hughes says that Australia is the only white part of the Empire that has not adopted conscription that is to go forth and no man dare contradict it, and if any man does dare contradict it the military censorship will be put upon him and the paper that is game to publish the truth is liable to be prosecuted, liable to be closed up.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Would you allow the British Empire to go down without fighting for it?

The PREMIER: I take up the interjection. The men who are prepared to trample on the freedom of the British people in this thing are the people who are doing what is most calculated to bring down the British Empire. (Hear, hear!) We are a people who are able to know the truth; we can be trusted to know the truth.

Mr. VOWLES: Did you not censure me the other day for telling the truth?

The PREMIER: That is an interjection hardly worth taking notice of. A Royal Commission found that the hon. member did

not tell the truth, and he was not man enough to apologise. Why should I waste my time on individuals of that sort?

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I could go on quoting instance after instance of where the same sort of thing has been done by the censor, but it is quite unnecessary for me to multiply instances. I have given examples of what the censor is doing. I have told you that the remarks I made yesterday to representatives of the Press were not allowed to be published. I sent a telegram to the Prime Minister of Australia, and I gave the contents to the Press, but they were not allowed to publish it.

Mr. VOWLES: Didn't think much of it.

The PREMIER: Of course—keep it in the dark, keep it all in the dark. Well, if hon. members opposite want to be champions of that sort of thing, they are welcome to it, but I shall certainly never champion it. (Hear, hear!) I consider that not only are we entitled to discuss this matter, but we are bound to do it. I shall certainly not shirk the responsibility. I consider I am bound to expose a thing of this sort, and in exposing it I feel I am doing something of service to the country, something that will make towards the safety and welfare of this Commonwealth. I am opposed to conscription; hon. members are supporting it. They are entitled to put their views, and I am entitled to put mine. But with the system being adopted at present, there is only one side allowed to put its views; and anyone who dares say otherwise, the military censorship is upon him and he is shut up, closed down. I hope that hon. members will deal with this matter in the spirit in which it ought to be dealt with. It is a most important question. It is involving the question of freedom of speech and the freedom of the Press. It is dealing with the most important issue that has ever been before the people. (Hear, hear!) I am one of those who believe that, if conscription were carried in this country, the efficiency of Australia as a factor in bringing about a successful conclusion of the war, would not be increased. I believe that. All the more do I believe that, if under any circumstances conscription were to be carried by the adoption of such methods as these; because, although they may keep the people in the dark while this campaign is going on, they won't be able to keep them in the dark much longer. This information is bound to go round. They may think to get a temporary advantage of having an affirmative vote carried on the 20th December; but they must bear in mind that the people will eventually find out that information has been suppressed from them, and that they will resent it. I have much pleasure in moving the motion standing in my name.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

For convenience the following extracts, as above quoted, are set out at length:—

Extracts of speech of the Premier, delivered in Centennial Hall, 19th November.

[Portions in black letter struck out by Censor.]

Re Divisions.

“Now five divisions are 100,000 men, and since the beginning we have recruited 383,000 men in Australia. Of that number they tell us 60,000 have not left

Australia's shores. Very well, there have been only 114,000 casualties. Very well I put these two together and take them from 383,000 which leaves 269,000. As five divisions are 100,000 I take them away and 169,000 men are left for the purposes of reinforcements. So that on these figures without any further recruiting you could go on from 12 to 16 months. (Loud and prolonged applause.) And if we continue the voluntary system at the rate they say we are now doing we would go on for over two years able to reinforce on these numbers at the rate of 7,000 men per month. Yet you are asked to sanction the proposals for the compulsory deportation of the single men of the country—the single men between twenty to forty-four.”

Re form of Question.

“The question Mr. Hughes puts is this—“Are you in favour of the proposal of the Commonwealth Government for reinforcing the Commonwealth forces overseas?” How misleading that question is! I don't care whether you are for ‘Yes’ or for ‘No.’ But is that a fair form of question? (No.) And does not the Prime Minister know that the people of Australia know it is unfair? That it is intended to mislead! To get them to vote for ‘reinforcements’ We are all in favour of reinforcements. (Great applause.) But not only are they misleading those in Australia—they are keeping the men at the front in the dark. Is there anything more reprehensible, more to be condemned than the attempt on the part of your own Government to deceive the men who are fighting for you at the front? (Hear, hear!) That is what is being done by the form of the question, and I appeal to all fair-minded Australians to gauge these proposals by the way in which they are brought forward and by the manner in which the question is being asked. (Applause.) We are told by the Prime Minister that if I were to tell a lie on this platform to-night I will not get a chance of telling another during the campaign, so I have to keep strictly to the truth.”

Re Senator Ware's Statements.

“Senator Ware, of the Union Parliament of South Africa, said he had been instructed to forward the fraternal greetings of their comrades in South Africa. He urged them to vote against conscription. The Canadians were only paying their soldiers until the soldiers left their shores, and then Great Britain had to bear the cost. The same thing applied in South Africa. The Imperial Government had to pay the South African volunteers. The statement that

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Australia was the only portion of the Empire that had not carried conscription was untrue. If it was carried, he predicted it would be used for industrial as well as military purposes."

HON. J. TOLMIE: I gave the Chief Secretary an opportunity of allowing this motion to go through as "Formal"; but he did not accept it.

The PREMIER: I did not say "Not formal."

HON. J. TOLMIE: Somebody did.

MR. PAYNE: I think we want a little light on a matter like this.

HON. J. TOLMIE: We have had an opportunity of listening to the Chief Secretary, and I think it will be agreed that the only time he made reference to the motion before the House was when he read it at the conclusion of his speech. The rest of the time he occupied in endeavouring to lay before this House—and, perhaps, through "Hansard," the country—a speech delivered by him on a former occasion—portion of which, he says, was not published. He did not endeavour to show that the censor was not actuated by a sense of his duty in the action which he took.

The PREMIER: That depends upon what duties the Government put on him. If they have put political duties on him, I suppose he has exercised them.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The only offence he seems to have committed is that he censored a speech which was delivered by the Chief Secretary. Because of that fact it does not necessarily follow that a motion of this kind should be carried by the House. The Chief Secretary said that the censorship should be an aid in winning the war.

The PREMIER: I said in the direction of winning the war.

HON. J. TOLMIE: We take it, in the absence of other evidence, that that is the feeling which actuates the censor, and that he censors such news as he thinks will not be an aid to the winning of the war. The hon. gentleman has said that the powers of the censor were being used for political purposes. That is one of those rash statements that very frequently emanate from the hon. gentleman.

MR. PAYNE: We have proved that it is true.

HON. J. TOLMIE: There is no evidence that it is true.

The TREASURER: What is the referendum but a political one.

HON. J. TOLMIE: There is no evidence that the censor knows the politics of any person.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Oh, oh! and laughter.

The PREMIER: He is political in this sense—that he favours conscription.

HON. J. TOLMIE: If he does know the politics of the various speakers, at any rate, there has been no evidence adduced of that fact.

MR. DUNSTAN: He knows the politics of his own side.

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HON. J. TOLMIE: Why should this speech of the Chief Secretary be delivered to this House? What is the object of his bringing it here?

The PREMIER: A good object.

MR. MORGAN: To get it into "Hansard."

HON. J. TOLMIE: This is not a matter of legislative concern. Any action an officer of the Commonwealth Government may take in reference to the Chief Secretary has absolutely no reference whatsoever to this Chamber. Hon. gentlemen talk about freedom of speech. Do they remember the action which they took less than a week ago for the purpose of gagging freedom of speech by hon. members speaking in this House? Had you, Mr. Speaker, not exercised the powers you possessed and come to the assistance of members on this side, we would not have had an opportunity of even expressing our opinions here. We did not have an opportunity given to us. Hon. gentlemen on the other side talk about freedom of speech. What freedom of speech do they allow when it is possible for them to prevent it?

MR. PAYNE: More than you ever allowed. You used the gag twenty times worse.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

HON. J. TOLMIE: The only action complained of is one of interference in an arbitrary manner with certain rights of the Hon. the Chief Secretary.

The PREMIER: Oh, no; the rights of the public.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The hon. gentleman may say it is the rights of the public. I maintain that, in so far as any interference has taken place, it has only been an interference with—not the rights, but the alleged rights, of the Chief Secretary; and in connection with the matter, he has not shown that he possessed the rights which he claimed. When you make reference to the motion which he has introduced, he has laid down certain propositions—some of them of a very highfaluting order—in regard to the inalienable rights of freedom of speech and matters of that kind, which he did not endeavour to sustain. All his time was occupied in showing that a speech was delivered by himself on a certain occasion, and that that speech was not allowed to be printed in the form in which he desired it should be. We must remember that, in time of war, there is a difference in the relations between the governing powers and the persons who are governed to that which exists in time of peace.

MR. H. L. HARTLEY: You mean a dictatorship, don't you, not a Government?

HON. J. TOLMIE: Under war conditions a surveillance of a man's words and actions is kept which is deemed quite unnecessary in times of peace; and hon. members in this Chamber, and outside this Chamber, realise the importance of such a difference existing.

The PREMIER: Yes, but under the cloak of war powers we must not commit a fraud on that power. That is what is being done.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The whole thing is whether the person who is authorised to keep that watch and ward over the actions and words of public speakers exceeded his duty, or did his duty.

The PREMIER: No. I say he has not the power to do what he did. I say it is highly illegal—that is unlawful. That is my contention.

HON. J. TOLMIE: You are well aware that in times of peace misdemeanours may be dealt with in quite a different way from that in which they are dealt with in times of war. In times of war it becomes essential to prevent the publication of any matter that is likely to have a serious effect upon the war. In times of peace a man's words and actions can be dealt with by the laws of the land that are in existence. If he does those things which ought not to have been done, then there is a mode of punishing him. But we cannot wait, in times of war, for courts of justice to decide whether individuals are acting detrimentally to the common weal. The practice of all times has been that when we are at war we have to deal with things on a war footing; and in those cases prevention is better than cure. That is why a censorship should exist.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Who is to be the judge?

HON. J. TOLMIE: There is an ejaculation made by an hon. member on the other side of who is to be the judge of the offence, or a possible offence. We cannot wait for the offence to be committed. We have to anticipate the commitment of that offence and we have to prevent it. Who, then, is to be the judge? Is it not the censor in time of war?

MR. O'SULLIVAN: Billy Hughes.

HON. J. TOLMIE: If those powers are to be used, he must have arbitrary powers. His position would be worse than useless if, when he proposed to take action, some person—or a court—could intervene and prevent him taking action until the matter had been debated or argument had been heard before a court. The whole damage would then be done. We have to depend upon the censor doing those things which he believes to be in the public good; and if he discharges that duty we have to stand by him. To a great extent we must stand by him not knowing actually what is the quality of the work he has done. We take it that the man who is appointed to be the censor is a man of probity, a man of loyalty, and a man of intelligence; and the union of those factors produces an individual who is recognised as being a fit person for carrying out this work. We have to remember that although we may rebel against a censorship being inflicted upon us, the right of the individual is subordinated to the safety of the nation; whatever be his status in the community, that is the position. The law says that one man must be sacrificed for the many. In this case it may be the Chief Secretary who is deemed necessary to be sacrificed for the many.

THE PREMIER: What limitation would you put on his powers?

HON. J. TOLMIE: In the motion which the Chief Secretary has submitted to you he has talked to you about the freedom of discussion and the liberty of the subject. He has spoken about the liberty of the Press.

[4.30 p.m.] These are phrases which we have all heard, and we know the meaning of them to a very great extent, but I want you to understand that neither of those phrases is to be found in any part of the statute-book or in any maxims of law. They are simply catch phrases that have been used by individuals, and they serve a certain purpose, perhaps, on an occasion like this, or, perhaps, when

a man is speaking in an excited manner at some street corner to please an audience whose attention he desires to attract. The hon. gentleman has come down here and framed a motion in which he tells us that the liberty of the subject is being invaded, that the liberty of the Press has been taken away; that there is no freedom of discussion; and that time-honoured customs with which we have been acquainted are being swept away from us. I am pointing out that the hon. gentleman cannot deny that in no statute either in the English laws or on the Queensland statute-book or in the Commonwealth—that there is no statute providing for the freedom of discussion or the liberty of the Press.

THE PREMIER: So you say these things have not been established by custom?

HON. J. TOLMIE: In no time has there been any proclamation on the right of liberty of speech or freedom of discussion. For several reasons that has been so. There are statements which no man is entitled to make against another. It is the publication of those words spoken or written that constitutes the offence, and the individual has got a certain recourse if those things are said against him.

THE PREMIER: I do not object to that at all.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I am only just showing you that there is not this individual liberty to give expression to an opinion that the hon. gentleman has put forth in his motion. We must be clear on these points. The hon. gentleman has stated or wishes the public to infer that they have got unlimited right to speak and to write just as they feel.

THE PREMIER: Is there any statute giving you liberty to eat? (Laughter.)

HON. J. TOLMIE: Is there any statute giving you liberty to breathe? I am endeavouring to emphasise the point that the hon. gentleman is trying to obscure the issue in the motion that he has put forward. He wants hon. members on that side of the Chamber, who may not be able to think the position out; and he is trying to seduce hon. members on this side of the House, who are quite able to think the position out and to realise it, to support him in the attitude he has taken up, and in order to do that he has told these hon. members; and he is seeking to tell members of the community outside this Chamber, that they are being robbed of the freedom of speech, that they are being robbed of the right to give expression to their views in the Press.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: So we are.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I am pointing out that they have not got these rights.

MR. FOLEY: Then it is time we had them.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The hon. gentleman knows that it is a misdemeanour to publish any words which are seditious, and if he has not got the right to go about preaching sedition, to speak his mind on a matter of sedition, is it not the same as speaking his mind on other things; and he says the censorship is depriving him of the right to give free expression to his thoughts. Does he want the right to give expression to his thoughts in regard to sedition?

THE PREMIER: No.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Let us point out some of those points that indicate a seditious in-

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tention as laid down by an eminent authority. It means an intention to bring into hatred, or contempt, or to excite to disaffection against the King, or the Government, and Constitution of the United Kingdom as by law established, or either House of Parliament, or the administration of justice, or to excite British subjects to attempt otherwise than by lawful means the alteration of any matter in church or State by law established, or to promote feelings of ill-will and hostility between different classes. And that is the point that the censor has to watch, as carefully as it is possible for a man to watch, in order not to allow anything to be published that is going to promote feelings of ill-will and hostility between the different classes. If the Premier of Queensland gets upon the public platform, forgets himself in the excitement of the moment, and in the enthusiasm that is generated by the generous applause that he hears on all sides, makes statements that are inimical to the well-being of the body politic, and likely to promote feelings of ill-will and hostility between the different classes, is it not then the duty of the censor to intervene and say that those things shall not go forth to the public? We have never had the right to express our mind as laid down in the "Rights of Man" theory in the French Constitution of 1791.

The PREMIER: I trust the large audience that heard my speech. They will know whether there was anything seditious in it or not.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Let us come to the motion itself, which was never touched upon by the Premier.

Mr. FOLEY: It is time you reached it.

HON. J. TOLMIE: It is time I reached it, and the Premier never reached it until the end of his speech, when he read it, and he would like the words it contains to go forth without any explanation of their meaning to the public. At any rate there will be some evidence adduced to show that in the very motion he proposed he was endeavouring to throw dust in the eyes of the electors of the State of Queensland and those who will participate in the vote to be taken on the 20th of next month. I have pointed out that all this boasted freedom that he has talked about, and which he declares he has been deprived of, is a freedom that does not exist; that the freedom that we possess is a freedom that is circumscribed by the rights and by the interests of others. We have only that freedom that will not transgress the rights of another individual, and so it is with every other person in the body politic. They have their rights, but those rights are limited rights; their rights are limited by the rights of every individual and the Premier of Queensland has no more right to trample upon the rights of others than has any other individual to trample upon his rights. There is a circumscription of his rights and his words have to be watched just the same as the words of any other individual, and if any word that he utters is going to be detrimental to the Empire when it is passing through a time of stress, as it is at present, then the censor has to shut down on his words and not allow them to go forth to the public. The motion before the House is "That this House emphatically protest against the manner in which the censorship is being abused to suppress reports of the views of those opposing the Commonwealth

Government's conscription proposals." That is the first proposition which he lays down in the motion before the House.

The PREMIER: I have proved it.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Evidence is required that there has been any abuse of the censorship.

The PREMIER: I will leave it to any jury with the full confidence that they will find him guilty.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Evidence is required that there has been any abuse of the censorship. The fact that certain utterances were made by the Premier and that they were not allowed to be published does not in itself constitute an abuse of censorship. He has to remember that in a time of peace there is no censorship, and that in a time of war use or abuse is a different thing.

Mr. FOLEY: We have had abuse in this case.

HON. J. TOLMIE: If the Premier desires the country to be with him in regard to the motion that he has brought forward, then he has to prove conclusively that the censor has been abusing his powers. All that the Premier has done is to heap vituperation upon the censor because the censor has not agreed with him in the statements he made.

The PREMIER: Not the censor. I suppose the censor got instructions.

HON. J. TOLMIE: That is one of the innuendoes that the hon. gentleman throws out, whether on a public platform or elsewhere. He is an adept in matters of that kind. The innuendo is put forth in a plausible manner with a view of making an impression upon the audience that may be before him. He now shifts his ground from blaming the censor to say that the censor, as an individual, has taken instructions from others.

The PREMIER: It is the censorship I blame.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The censorship is the work done by the censor, and if the hon. gentleman blames the censorship, he must blame the man who did the work.

The PREMIER: I do not know the censor.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Although he does not know the censor, he says that he must be doing what he was told to do by someone else.

The PREMIER: I know what the censor did—that is all that is troubling me—and I want the public to know it.

HON. J. TOLMIE: So long as the hon. gentleman knows what the censor did, it is all right, but when the hon. gentleman says he knows the censor had instructions, then he is taking a mean advantage of his position.

The PREMIER: I say I presume he had instructions.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Why does he presume? At a time like this, why did he cast forth those words to be published in "Hansard" and distributed all over Queensland? Is it not with the view of influencing the public of this State of Queensland? The second proposition he lays down is a condemnation of the action of the censor as an unwarrantable interference with the rights of free discussion on the platform and in the Press upon one of the gravest issues ever submitted to the public. I am quite in accord with the hon. gentleman when he speaks of this as being one of the gravest issues that has

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ever been submitted to the public, and I am quite of opinion—possibly he agrees with me—that this is an occasion on which nothing that is detrimental to the public welfare should be allowed to go before the public. There are things in the conduct of a war of these tremendous proportions that it would be a wrong thing to place before the public with their limited vision—(Government laughter)—have I not heard the hon. gentleman talk about the limited vision of members on this side of the House when we criticised motions that have been submitted by the Government when they have not given us the details? How can we enter into their thoughts when we do not know the whole details? And is it not the same in relation to the great issues of this war? You have heard “generals” sit at the breakfast table and tell how an action should be fought. You have heard men who do not know the right side of a horse to get up on tell how a jockey has thrown away the race, and if they had to do it how they would do it in a different manner. (Interruption.)

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

HON. J. TOLMIE: In relation to these matters there are matters that must be censored—that must of necessity be kept from the public. I have already pointed out that no such right as free discussion exists, but where persons interfere with the right of free discussion the responsibility rests upon them. In times of peace persons are at liberty to talk as freely as they like, but they must take the responsibility; but there must be some check on that freedom of speech if it is going to be hurtful to the body politic. Now, the Premier says this is a flagrant infringement of the time-honoured rights of a free people.

The PREMIER: So it is.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Is that not flappedoodle? What have been the time-honoured rights? He never attempted to explain to us what these time-honoured rights were.

The PREMIER: I thought you knew.

HON. J. TOLMIE: He thought we knew them. We knew them too well for him. That is the position. The hon. gentleman quite understood that we knew what the rights of the people were too well if he entered into an explanation, but he entered into no explanation, and wanted to let a few high-sounding phrases of this sort be good enough for the public and thought he would catch the ear of the public. We know the ear of the public is frequently caught by high-sounding phrases, just as the eye is caught by a beautiful painting. And so, if in passing, people would read this motion of his and take no notice of it, possibly the phrase would catch on and it would stick on. Now, there can be no time-honoured rights in regard to matters of this kind. Only once, in 1791, in a declaration of rights made at the overthrow of the French monarchy, it was laid down that the people possessed the freedom of discussion, the most precious right of the individual by them. But, with the passing of the Republic the Rights of Man faded away, just the same as the Republic faded away. The Constitution was lost, destroyed, and it was never reprinted in any other Constitution. The only Constitution in the world to-day which lays down the rights of man is the Constitution of Belgium. In Great Britain particularly are not the rights of every individual circum-

scribed by the rights of others? I take it that the hon. gentleman has failed in proving the proposition he set forth to prove—that there has been an undue censorship of the speeches made by public men, that undue censorship has been made with a political view—

The PREMIER: Do you think the public will be allowed to have this debate published in the Press?

HON. J. TOLMIE: That the censor has been acting under instructions. He has proved none of those points. The only thing he has endeavoured to show is that he is a much injured individual, that there were certain things he desired to lay before the public, things that were held not to be in conformity with the welfare, not only of this Commonwealth but of the Empire, and the man whose work it was to oversee and to watch those expressions discharged his duty by striking out certain expressions made by the Chief Secretary, and because those expressions have been struck out, the Chief Secretary thinks he is a very much injured individual, and that this House should carry a motion passing a vote of censure on the Federal Government because of their appointment of the censor. I am going to move an amendment to omit all the words after the word “That,” with the view of inserting in lieu thereof the words—

“in the opinion of this House, it is imperative that the fullest support should be rendered to the Federal Government in every action which it may consider necessary for the defence of the Empire and to prevent advantage accruing to the enemy countries by the publication of information useful to them or by misrepresentation of any kind.”

As loyal citizens, I am certain that that motion must appeal to every hon. member in this House. I am sure it is a motion that must appeal and will appeal to the great public audience outside.

The PREMIER: You want to sidetrack the issue.

HON. J. TOLMIE: We want to render the fullest support to the Federal Government in every action which they take in defending the Empire. Is there any man in this Chamber who will get up and say it is not his duty to stand by the Federal Government in any action they take in defence of the Empire?

Mr. O’SULLIVAN: Not that action.

HON. J. TOLMIE: We say that the Federal Government is employing means at the present time to withhold information from the enemy. All their experience of the past sad three years has gone to show that information has leaked out even from the highest sources to the enemy; that the enemy has been as well advised of all our actions as have been the authorities controlling the Empire at the present moment—been better advised of the condition of things than have the general public of the Empire. If that is the case, is it not our bounden duty to try to prevent that in every possible way, and when the censor endeavours to prevent information leaking out that would be useful to the enemy he is certainly discharging the duty for which he was placed there, and included in that is the large amount of misrepresentation that is going on at the present time. The objects of the Federal Government and the aims of the Government have

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been misrepresented, and the actions of the Imperial Government are being decried by persons who know nothing concerning those aims. This misrepresentation is having an effect and a bad effect upon the minds of a portion of the community; those men who do not think strongly and clearly are likely to be deluded by the sophistries that are being put forth by those who, at any rate, if they are not desirous of seeing the Empire thrown to pieces, are not at least vigorous in maintaining its support. When we find that, it becomes the bounden duty of every man who desires to see the Empire stand to give all the powers he possibly can to the Federal and the Imperial Governments to control the Empire at the present time, and in such an Assembly as we are in the present time is it not more the bounden duty of members to say to the Federal Government, which stands for government here in Australia, "We are behind you in all things you are doing to maintain the Empire, for bringing it out of the difficulties in which it is, in putting it on a high pedestal of safety; we are behind you in endeavouring to prevent the leakage of information to those who may possibly utilise it against the Empire; we are behind you in all those efforts that are put forward for the purpose of stopping misrepresentation"? I beg to move this amendment to the motion which has been moved by the hon. the Chief Secretary, and I am not the least doubtful it is an amendment that must demand the support of all loyal men in this Chamber.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. VOWLES (*Dulby*): In seconding the amendment of the leader of the Opposition I do so with the feeling that it should command unanimous support. (Government laughter.)

Mr. COLLINS: The authority on misrepresentation.

Mr. VOWLES: If the hon. gentleman says I am an authority on misrepresentation, I will probably deal, before I finish, with misrepresentation, and that is what I propose to do; and I propose to go over some of the wilful and scandalous misrepresentations of political agents, including several members of this House, during the last conscription campaign. The original motion by the Premier was that we should come to the conclusion that there has been a flagrant infringement of the time-honoured rights of all free people, because a private individual made a certain speech outside this House, and because a newspaper did not publish the whole of that speech in consequence of the censorship which exists at the present time. Mr. Ryan, as a public speaker on the platform in the Centennial Hall, or wherever he speaks, is in quite a different position to the leader of the Government sitting in this House, and any conclusion that hon. members may come to or interference by the censor with what hon. members do within the four walls of this Chamber, would be a very different matter and one we would have some control over, and it would be within our province to pass resolutions, but now we are simply beating the air. There has been no infringement of the rights of any member of this House. It is the private rights outside this Chamber, and that being so, we have nothing whatever to do with it.

Mr. STOPFORD: You know the newspapers have been forbidden to use the word "conscription."

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Mr. VOWLES: That is a matter for the newspapers themselves. Let them fight their own battles without having their servile followers here coming to their rescue and passing one of these resolutions. Anybody who, as I did during the last campaign, worked the backblocks on the conscription issue, must know that the propaganda work and the circulars issued were not only misleading but they were lying and untrue, and not calculated to do any good to His Majesty's subjects. They were specially designed for the purpose of creating racial and other dissensions. They were circulated where there were no newspapers to contradict them, and the whole thing was done with cunning. There were circulars specially prepared for the backblocks and which never saw the light of day in Brisbane, and circulars dealing with the bogey of black labour were circulated broadcast in the backblocks. When we are dealing with national matters, the least you can expect is that your political opponents will at least subscribe to the truth; but when you find that, not only do they distort the truth, but that they resort to all kinds of subterfuge to induce people to believe their arguments, then I think you must agree with me that there should be a censorship of their actions, their writings, and their utterances.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Bring forth the proof.

Mr. VOWLES: We do not want to go far to look for proof. The speech of the hon. member for Bowen, which you, Mr. Speaker, would not allow to go forth in the form in which it was submitted, is sufficient proof. If there was any seditious speech ever made in this Chamber, it was the speech which was made by the hon. member for Bowen.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. gentleman correct in stating that you censored the speech of the hon. member for Bowen when he spoke here on the Address in Reply last session?

The SPEAKER: I was speaking to the Chief Secretary at the time, but if the hon. member did make that statement, it is an untrue statement, and I ask him to withdraw it.

Mr. VOWLES: I will withdraw it, but I will say that the report as it appears in "Hansard" to-day has been censored by somebody. I understood that that was your particular function.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member may know that I may censor a speech, but on no occasion was the speech of the hon. member for Bowen censored by me, but by the Federal censor. The Prime Minister made a statement that nobody could

[5 p.m.] censor it but the Speaker, but I say, for the information of the House, that an attempt was made by the military censor to censor the speech of the hon. member for Bowen.

Mr. VOWLES: Well, it does not appear in "Hansard" as it was delivered, and if it was not a seditious speech, why did the censor censor it?

The SPEAKER: Is the hon. member accusing a member of this House of making a seditious speech?

Mr. VOWLES: I ask, why did the censor ask that it should be censored? Not because it would hurt the conscription issue, but because, under the privileges of this House, a speech was made that could not be

made outside. (Interruption.) We find that the hon. member, who spoke in Melbourne, said that he was not afraid of the threats of "Billy" Hughes, of intimidation and coercion, and putting people in gaol, but we find him making those statements under the privilege of this House now. He is not going to make them outside.

The PREMIER: I did. I made those statements to the Press, and the censor would not allow them to go in.

Mr. VOWLES: I asked the hon. member this afternoon, when he complained about his cablegram being interfered with, why he would not give us the text of it. He said he would later on, but he was very careful not to do so. Let the people of Queensland say whether the contents were true.

The PREMIER: It was ready to be printed two days ago, and the censor would not allow it to go in.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. VOWLES: It could go into "Hansard" to-night, and I asked the hon. member to do that, but he would not allow it to go in. The hon. member is very careful about the privileges of free speech. How often are we denied the privileges of free speech? Have we not been guillotined and gagged about public matters? Only last week were we not refused the liberty of moving amendments on important matters going through this Chamber? And we know the reason why. We heard the member for Bowen saying on another motion of censure, "We have the numbers." They have the brutal majority, and they bludgeon everything through, they use them to block the expression of the opinions of men who come here as members of Parliament to deprive us of the right to freedom of speech. (Interruption.) Where does the freedom of speech of the leader of the Government come in in the way he treated me over the censure motion? We can see how the truth is coming forward now, and how he tried to cloud over the issue. The truth is coming out, as I said it would. Not only did the hon. member try to block freedom of discussion, but also freedom in the production of evidence on the commission, because he insisted on its being closed in quick time, and yet he comes here squealing—it is a favourite word of his—squealing because the censor is pleased to cut something out of his speech. He is such a lofty individual that he can afford to ignore hon. members sitting on this side. He told us of the applause he got, and how many people were there.

Mr. GILLIES: You ought to be ashamed to show your face in Parliament.

Mr. VOWLES: If I were like the hon. member I would be ashamed. I am not ashamed of anything I have done. (Interruption.)

Mr. GILLIES was understood to interject "Notorious liar."

The SPEAKER: I ask the hon. member for Eacham to withdraw that remark.

Mr. GILLIES: No, I will not withdraw. It is true.

The SPEAKER: I must again ask the hon. member to withdraw.

Mr. GILLIES: In accordance with parliamentary procedure, I withdraw the expression.

The SPEAKER: I suggest to the hon. member for Dalby that he discuss this motion

without introducing personal matter. He is not in order in dragging in the Wando Vale inquiry under this motion, and I hope that he will leave the personal element out as far as possible.

Mr. VOWLES: I am dealing with the subject of freedom of speech.

Mr. SMITH: Why do you not stick to that?

Mr. VOWLES: I am going to stick to it. I was about finished that line of argument when the hon. member threw in that dirty slur, and it is necessary that I should insist on an apology. Personally, I do not care what his opinions are, but if he chooses to insult me, I have got to insult him, or see that the rules of the House are followed out. After all these crossfirings, I would like to proceed with the matter a little further. We find that there are certain newspapers, particularly newspapers in our midst, that are prepared to say anything. There is no such thing as national honour with them. There is no such thing as following the truth, even in such an issue as we have to face, one of the biggest national issues that have ever had to be faced in the world.

Mr. DUNSTAN: It should be freely discussed.

Mr. VOWLES: It should be freely discussed. It should be discussed dispassionately, but it should be discussed always from the point of truth. (Government laughter and interruption.)

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. STOPFORD: Are you going to censor yourself?

Mr. VOWLES: Only the other day, when the Premier was speaking in Melbourne, what did he say on the question of military compulsion? He started to talk about the black labour question. Is that misreading, or is it true?

Mr. FOLEY: It is perfectly true.

Mr. VOWLES: When he tells the people of Queensland that the Prime Minister's idea is not to bring about a proper state of military affairs in Australia, but that there is some hidden desire on his part to injure unionism, to get trade unionists out of Australia and introduce black labour, is he telling the truth or is he wilfully misleading the people of the Commonwealth? And when people with the title of Premier will turn round and descend to this sort of tactics, when they regard this as fair play and fair tactics in electioneering on an occasion like this, what must be expected when they get out into the backblocks where there are no newspapers to report their utterances, where votes can be got from people who do not follow politics, who can be easily led? What can we expect they will do with electors who will return gentlemen who sit on the other side, the uninitiated people who do not read—people who are gullible and are easily misled?

Mr. WEIR: There must be a lot at Dalby, or you would not be there.

Mr. VOWLES: Well, there are a lot in Dalby, and there are a lot of sensible people there, and I will just tell you—to show their common sense—that they gave a majority of 700 in favour of conscription on the last occasion.

Mr. STOPFORD: And they have an eligible member who has not enlisted.

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Mr. VOWLES: They have not an eligible member who has not enlisted. They have nothing of the kind. The eligible men in this House sit on the other side of the Chamber. At any rate, that is a matter that we can thrash out later on.

The SPEAKER: Order! I suggest to the hon. member that he take no notice of the interjections.

Mr. VOWLES: I suppose that if they insist on interjecting I must reply to them.

Mr. STOPFORD interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is introducing matter that has no bearing on the question at all.

Mr. VOWLES: I do not propose to continue that any further. I think every man must realise in his heart that the nation has arrived at such a stage that it is necessary for every one of us to work together to bring about the best results obtainable in the Commonwealth, and the only way to do that is to face the issues properly. We know what the issues are. We know what the responsibilities are. If we differ in opinion, let us argue them temperately; let us argue them truthfully; let us put the true issues before the public, but do not let us mislead them; do not let us have a campaign of vituperation and scandalising; do not let us introduce the side issues of sectarianism and racial troubles, and so on. (Renewed interjections.) If that sort of thing is going to go on if I had the power I would block everybody from speaking. I would use the censorship. I would not allow it to be done. I would allow the people to be guided by approved literature—(Government laughter)—such as we had in the printed campaign literature on the referendums, the statement of the case from one side and the statement of the case from the other. If nothing but the facts and the truth were used on both sides, then we could reduce the issues down, but if we are going to have a campaign like we had last time—a campaign of misrepresentation—if we are going to have all the petty, political, party underminings that are carried on by hon. members opposite who have no souls of their own, who have no minds of their own in a matter of this sort, but who are bound to carry out the dictation of their political bosses, so that they must say that black is white and white is black if they are told, then we shall never have a fair fight. Can we say that we get the best results and the most good from a campaign that is going to be conducted in such a way? I say it is a matter of such importance that everybody should rise to the occasion and see that the thing is honestly conducted. So far as the censorship is concerned, if there is not going to be unity about the campaign, if misleading statements, if all kinds of subterfuges and trickery are going to be used, then I say the censorship is highly desirable—it is absolutely necessary.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: Censor your leader—"Billy" Hughes.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. member talks about censoring my leader. Mr. "Billy" Hughes is no leader of mine or anybody else on this side.

The TREASURER: Then you repudiate him?

Mr. VOWLES: No, I am one who supported his policy on the last occasion, and I am supporting it now. I am not going to back and fill. I do not care what the result

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may be. I am going to carry on the campaign the same as I did previously and stand or fall by it. I sincerely trust that this House will carry the amendment proposed by the leader of the Opposition. I do not see how they can decline to do so, because any man who votes against that amendment will have come to the conclusion that it is not desirable in the interests of the nation that information should be kept from the enemy.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Bunkum!

Mr. VOWLES: He will have come to the conclusion that it is desirable that the censorship should not prevent it. I say it is desirable that all these side issues and petty strife should be blocked once and for all in order that we may come to the conclusion that the matters outlined in the amendment are desirable. I have much pleasure in supporting it.

The PREMIER: I do not propose to accept the amendment. The motion that I moved deals with a specific matter. It deals with the manner in which the censorship has been abused to suppress the reports of those who are opposing the Commonwealth Government's conscription proposal, and it condemns as an unwarrantable interference with the rights of free discussion on the platform and in the Press of one of the gravest issues that has ever been submitted to the public; and declares that it is a flagrant infringement of the time honoured rights of freedom of speech. Now, that is a specific motion that deals with a specific matter—the action of the censor in suppressing the reports of speeches, and the views expressed by those who are opposed to the Commonwealth Government's conscription proposal. Now, the leader of the Opposition has moved an amendment which proposed to omit those words altogether, and to carry some other motion. In short, it is an amendment moved to sidetrack the real issue contained in the motion which I moved.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I made it perfectly clear that the censorship is not objected to, provided it is kept within the proper ambit—the proper sphere—within which a censorship should be exercised.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Who is the judge?

The PREMIER: And that is for the safety and defence of the Commonwealth and the Empire. Anything that is to prevent information getting to the enemy, and so on, is perfectly legitimate and right. But here in this particular case, during both these campaigns, the censorship has been used for political purposes; it has been used—to mould public opinion in favour of the conscription proposals. Now, in that it is going beyond the power of the censor, and beyond the power of the Commonwealth Government; and it is an infringement of the private rights of citizens.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: Now, we are not going to be sidetracked on this question by an amendment of this sort. (Hear, hear!) Of course, the leader of the Opposition thinks that by wording his motion in this way he can compel the members of this House to vote for it.

Mr. FORSYTH: Compel them?

The PREMIER: Well, he can induce them to vote for it; on account of the way in

which it is worded—perhaps I should put it that way. Anyone who supports this amendment votes for conscription. That is the first and foremost part of his motion—"That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that the fullest support should be rendered to the Federal Government in any action which it might consider necessary for the defence of the Empire." Mr. Hughes will explain to the public that he considers it is necessary for the defence of the Empire; and he says, "There is a resolution of the Queensland Parliament that I am going to be backed up in everything that I consider necessary. Conscription is necessary for the defence of the Empire." He has told us so. We don't agree with him. We don't make Mr. Hughes the judge of what is expedient in these circumstances. The question is submitted to the people; they are the persons who are to decide. I differ from Mr. Hughes and his Government in the wisdom of the adoption of such proposals as these; consequently, I cannot accept the amendment, and I hope that the House will reject it. As I made perfectly clear on the original motion, I make clear now—that any action the censorship might take in the direction of preventing any advantage accruing to the enemy by the publication of information which would be useful to them, and so on, I entirely support them in taking; that is within its proper sphere.

MR. FORSYTH: Who is to be the judge of its proper sphere?

THE PREMIER: The judges of its proper sphere are the courts of law; they will decide what is the ambit of the power.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Oh! Oh!

THE PREMIER: The Commonwealth Government has the power within the sphere of what is for the safety or the defence of the Commonwealth; they are the judges of that, but the Commonwealth Government has not the power which I say they are now pretending to exercise. They are doing something that they have no constitutional power to do. (Hear, hear!) I say that the censorship has no more right to tell the Brisbane Press—the "Daily Standard," the "Brisbane Courier," the "Mail," the "Telegraph," "Patriot," "Truth," or any of the other Press—what it should do, than any ordinary man in the street has power to go in and tell them to do it. I say it is unlawful and illegal. It is an exercise of a pretended power. It is something which the hon. member for Toowong ought to be acquainted with—what in law is described as a "fraud upon a power." I can conceive of nothing that I can compare it better to in law than a "fraud upon a power"—the pretended exercise of a power that does not exist. It is in the public interest that this motion is being moved, and it is for the public interest that I refuse to accept the amendment. Before I sit down I wish to reply to the suggestion of the hon. member for Dalby—that the cable which I sent to the Agent-General in October, 1916, was not made available to the public. It was made available to the public last year, and it was again made available to the Press this year; and there is the censor's mark on it; the red lead pencil is through it and the public are prevented from knowing now what is in that cable by the censor. (Hear, hear!)

Note.—The following is a copy of the cable sent to the Queensland Agent-General, by the Premier, dated 20th October, 1916, numbered 50:—

"Please transmit to Philip Snowden M.P. following message from Queensland Labour party:—Feeling in Australia very much divided on conscription question on which referendum is to be taken at instance of Hughes Government on October 28. Conscription opposed by all Australian unions and Labour organisations. Conscription support only comes from Conservative parties and Press and a few Labour politicians since expelled from Labour movement. Conscriptionists say it is necessary to secure reinforcements numbering 16,500 per month and that they can only be obtained by compulsion. Anti-conscriptionists claim that voluntary enlistment system has enabled Australia to do her part in the war and that ample reinforcements under voluntarism will be forthcoming to supply needs of Australian divisions at the front.

"There is well-grounded belief that those most clamorous for conscription hope to weaken power of the unions and pave the way for cheap labour for Commonwealth. The withdrawal of the virile manhood of Australia from industrial pursuits would lead to destruction of militant unionism and leave imminent danger to our great social and industrial reforms. Anti-conscriptionists believe that before life is conscripted wealth should be conscripted, pensions for soldiers increased and soldiers' conditions generally improved. Labourites are convinced that stimulation to Australian primary industries connected with production of wheat, dairy produce, metals, wool, hides and tallow will result in greater benefit to the allies than the introduction of conscription.

"Under conscription our primary industries will suffer considerably unless, as is feared by the unions, coloured labour is brought in to take the place of conscripted white men. Under Hughes' scheme all our eligible men, married and single, will be exhausted in less than a year. We will be glad if you will place these facts before the Australian soldiers in England who are voting on the question."

On 27th October, 1916, the Agent-General replied—

"No telegram No. 50 has been received during the current month. No. 49 and No. 51 have been received, but not No. 50."

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The TREASURER: The leader of the Opposition and the hon. member who seconded the amendment both made a very lame attempt to defend the policy of the conscription party in regard to the censorship. The hon. member devoted most of his time to laying down archaic notions of British liberty and British freedom with regard to the rights of free speech and the rights of British communities. He asserted that there has never been any such thing in Australia, or in any part of the British Empire, as freedom of speech or freedom of the Press.

Mr. FORSYTH: He said that there was no such law.

The TREASURER: "It does not exist," he said; those are the words he made use of. The freedom of the Press, he said, does not exist. That is true enough; it does not now exist, but ever since the day of Magna Charta until the days of William Hughes it has existed in British communities. It has only recently disappeared. The hon. member pretended to justify the limitation of freedom of speech and freedom of the Press on the ground that the people were children and fools. The hon. member gave a deplorable exhibition in attempting to defend what is an attack on the sacred rights of a British community, supporting such an attack upon liberty and freedom as we have had an instance of recently in Brisbane, and is happening all over Australia to-day, at the dictation of a despot. It is clear enough that Australia is rapidly reaching a crisis in these matters. The position is becoming critical, when all the free institutions of our democracy are being smashed down for the sake of a political party—for the sake of those who want conscription for ulterior motives, and not for the purpose of assisting the war.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The TREASURER: Under the pretence of military necessity the conscriptionists are coming in to sap the rights of the community, undermine their freedom, take away their liberties, and hand over the workers in a condition of slavery into the hands of the capitalists. It is a most melancholy thing to contemplate in these days, when an unscrupulous party is in power in the Commonwealth, that they have in their hands one of the greatest engines for the destruction of individual freedom, and of all kinds of liberty that was ever invented—that is, the War Precautions Act. In the exercise of their alleged power—because it is clear to me, as was stated by the Attorney-General this afternoon in his speech, that the system of censorship which has been adopted is an illegal exercise of their powers even under the War Precautions Act, wide and all as that is—it is the greatest possible evil that a community which has vaunted its freedom and democracy could be brought to the condition which we now see existing in Australia, where no man can state his views upon a certain political question without fear of his remarks being censored and himself being thrown into gaol.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Who passed the Act?

Hon. J. A. FINGLEY: We did not pass the regulations.

The TREASURER: The Act was passed by the Federal Government, and its power is abused by William Hughes and the other supporters of the Government now in power in the Federal Parliament. The Federal

Government are making a pretence of consulting the people upon this question of conscription. If they possibly have the power they are going to prevent the people giving any true expression of their views upon this question, and the way in which they are doing it is by gagging public speakers, by strangling the public Press, by misrepresenting the issue on the ballot-paper and elsewhere, and by disfranchising thousands of Australian-born British subjects. Those are precisely the methods adopted by the present Federal Government in regard to the conscription issue, and they are being supported by every man on that side, apparently, if the hon. member is speaking for his party this afternoon.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Never mind; stick to the Empire.

The TREASURER: The hon. member is not concerned about sticking to the Empire; he is more concerned about sticking to the shady, dirty methods of the capitalists who are in power in Australia at the present time. He does not care a twopenny dump; he does not care a snap of his fingers, about the Empire if certain other interests are at stake, nor does the hon. member for Toowong. What does he care—he, with a sneer on his face—about the Empire? His trouble about the Empire as long as the profiteer, the boddler, the unpatriotic and disloyal companies who filch wealth out of the people of the community, are all right? That is all the hon. member cares about. The Prime Minister, backed up by all on that side of the House, by all the Liberals in the Commonwealth, the reactionaries, the Tories, the conservatives, for their own political purposes, are making the referendum a howling farce. They are not consulting the views of the people of Australia; they are not asking them to express their free views upon this question; they are merely submitting, in a spirit of mockery, questions that they, by any possible means—no matter how shady or dirty—will have decided in the way they want it decided, even if they have to manipulate the vote at the ballot-box, even if they have practically to "rig" the ballot. I say that advisedly, because I have not the slightest doubt there is some intention of that kind. It was so at the last referendum. Let me quote a few lines from a letter which was received by Mr. Coyne, Secretary for Railways, only this morning from a soldier at the front apropos of this question—

"Referring to the election, I will say this: there will be some ugly questions asked when the boys get back to Australia. Wherever I have been, without a single exception, there is a belief that the soldiers' vote was faked, and it will take something more than I can prescribe to make them think otherwise."

That is what is written by a soldier at present in the trenches in France. The motion submitted by the Chief Secretary this afternoon is designed to record the indignation of members of the House against the ruthlessness of the methods adopted by the Commonwealth Government in their efforts to suppress freedom of speech and the freedom of the Press. I have an example here of the methods they are adopting to carry out their device with regard to this campaign. Here is a circular prepared by the Anti-Conscription Campaign Committee, of which I am the

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chairman. The circular was sent down to the censor in accordance with the regulations under the War Precautions Act to be passed by him. The circular deals solely with the question at issue before the Commonwealth. It is absolutely accurate so far as its statement of fact is concerned. Yet the whole lot

of it has been censored except [5.30 p.m.] one paragraph, which, without the context, is meaningless. I will quote it, so that members can judge for themselves as to whether the pamphlet should have been allowed to go forward or not; as to whether it is likely to have been any danger to the military situation in Europe; as to whether it would have furnished any information of value to the enemy. These are the only grounds on which anything of this nature, in a political discussion, should be censored. It is headed "Conscription the Death of Unionism"; it reads as follows:—

"The adoption of the conscription proposals of the Federal Government for military service will automatically enforce industrial compulsion in the workshop, in the mine, in the factory, on the wharf.

"To admit the case for military compulsion gives away the case entirely against industrial compulsion. Conscription places military law above civil law. The conscription machine can, and undoubtedly will, be used to paralyse the biggest efforts of organised labour. Trade unions may exist in name, but their power is gone once conscription is established. Industrial coercion is the inevitable corollary of conscription. The workers of Australia dearly prize the conditions of labour won by the trades unions after years of hard fighting. Remember that conscription is destroying unionism in France, in Britain, in New Zealand—in every country where the conscription curse is in operation.

"The real reason for the adoption of conscription in Australia by the union-hating 'Win-the-war' Government is not for military purposes, but in order to destroy the power of unionism.

"Three years ago the secretary of the French Federation of Labour warned the British workers as to the evil results that would accrue to the unions if conscription was adopted."

"Conscription would be for the British workers the first step towards industrial slavery and the end of their free action in the economic field both before and after the war. It would be as terrible a weapon in the hands of the British employer as it is actually in the hands of the French employer. The British workers cannot resist conscription too strongly unless they wish, after the war, to be con-

demned to industrial slavery and put at the mercy of their employers."

"That the result of conscription in Britain as thus foretold eventuated is a bitter, irrefutable fact, as the British workers to-day know to their cost.

"Industrial Liberties Swept Away.

"In Britain to-day under conscription, military control is paramount in all industries. Unionism has been trampled in the dust. The eight-hour day has given place to twelve and even sixteen hours. Child and woman labour have been firmly established in every industry, and threatens to permanently displace the adult male worker.

"In all countries wherever conscription becomes the law of the land, unionism vanishes; the unfortunate and helpless workers are reduced to the status of chattel slaves at the beck and call of a callous military autocracy.

"Let the Brisbane 'Daily Telegraph,' 16th October, 1916, testify to the indisputable charge that the Tory Government of Australia desire conscription against the workers. Said the 'Daily Telegraph' in this leading article: 'There remains in our midst a powerful enemy called political trade unionism. The political trades unionist is the man to be dealt with, both before the end of the war and afterwards. Voting 'Yes' by a majority will be the deadliest blow ever dealt to trades unionism!'

"Here is the sinister motive behind the whole conscription plot. Enslavement of the workers—not reinforcement for soldiers in the trenches. The destruction of labour organisation in Australia, not the destruction of Prussianism in Europe. Military control of the workshop—not military supremacy on the battlefield—this, and this alone, is the real conscription desired by the bitter labour antagonistic Hughes cum Irvine cabal."

"In every country where conscription is the law it has been used to render null and void all the achievements of trade unionism—to destroy customs, rights, and practices—to dilute and whittle away—to put unskilled in the place of skilled—women in the place of men—children in the place of adults.

"It is used not merely as an instrument of national defence, but as

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a merciless bludgeon to break down the standard and rights of the industrial classes. When conscription commences, from that moment every worker is a slave—every act of protest a crime, and every worker who dares to rise in just indignation against the violation of hard-won rights can be seized, interned, deported, or conscribed.”

That is a circular which was sent to the censor under my direction as chairman of the Anti-Conscription Campaign Committee, and was returned to me marked “Not to be published”—(Opposition Members: Hear, hear!)—the subject-matter of the pamphlet deals solely with a matter which is an issue before the electors to be decided by the electors by way of referendum.

Mr. STOPFORD: British liberty!

Mr. MORGAN: You ought to be ashamed of that pamphlet.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Absolute lies.

The TREASURER: That pamphlet contains reasonable arguments against conscription. It is couched in mild language and does not exceed the bounds of legitimate contention. Here is another pamphlet prepared at my suggestion by the Anti-Conscription Campaign Committee, which was sent down by direction to the censor, and returned to me mutilated so that it could not be intelligibly followed if it were circulated in the mutilated form. It is headed—

“CONSCRIPTION.

“AN APPEAL TO REASON.

“*Facts Fairly Stated.*

“The electors of Australia are to-day faced with the most vital question they have ever been called upon to decide. The issue involves far more than the wording of the ballot-paper indicates. The question is not, ‘Is Australia in favour of sending reinforcements’; our people have answered this question by deeds which speak louder than words, and whatever may be our views upon the subject, we are all prepared to admit that under the voluntary system we have created a unique record, and to-day the name of the volunteer Anzacs is indelibly written upon the pages of our history.

“We must now decide whether under the present system we can meet the immediate future requirements, **and also fulfil our food contracts with the mother country.** In the following pages you will find the facts and figures which sum up the situation. Study them and vote in the best interests of Australia

“Compiled and issued by the Anti-Conscription Literature Committee, ‘Worker’ Building, Elizabeth street, Brisbane.”

Mr. MACARTNEY: Give us the names.

The TREASURER: I am chairman of the committee, and I take the full responsibility. It continues—

“THE FARM FACED WITH RUIN.

“There is no section of the community to whom this grave question presents more serious issues than it does to the farmers. At the last referendum it was obvious that the man on the land real-

ised the disastrous effect that the conscription scheme would have and did have, by the issue of the notorious proclamation, and it is because the farmers did awake to the danger last year and because the conscriptionists know it, that the Prime Minister has made such desperate attempts to sugar-coat his latest scheme with exemptions calculated to gull unwary producers.

“If you are a farmer, don’t let him gull you!

“If Mr. Hughes actually intended to confine his scheme to the classes he indicates, there would not be enough men to provide the reinforcements he demands for more than a few months. That means that rural labour must inevitably be drawn upon.

“Once Hughes is given the power to seize and deport men, that power will become unlimited and unrestricted. There is nothing to prevent that. Study the question to be put to the people. There is absolutely nothing to prevent the Government, if the proposal is carried, from seizing the men on the farms, without any regard to the ruination that must result.

“Let the Australian farmer keep in mind the fate of his New Zealand fellow. In New Zealand the conscription law has been ruthlessly enforced against the farmers. Neither justice nor mercy has been shown. **Farmers’ sons have been dragged out of their homes in the dead of night by armed guards,** and this seizure of necessary labour in the most vital industry of the country is now having disastrous consequences.

“Advertisements are even now appearing in Australian papers calling for Australian workers to do shearing and farming work in New Zealand, because the rural workers of New Zealand, married and single, have been recklessly drafted in the oversea army, and the farms abandoned to the chance labour of the unfit. The result is ruin for the small farmer. Even Sir Joseph Ward, Minister for Finance, has had to admit (11th July) that it is becoming a serious question as to how much longer the country could supply men for the front.

“It is obvious, then, that the farmer has everything to lose under military compulsion. The calamitous effect that conscription must have on business generally will inevitably hit the primary producer’s returns, even if his own labour were left to him.

“Be warned in time. Once this power is granted the Government, you will not be able to call it back. Beyond the promises of the Prime Minister **you have no protection.** No other Minister or parliamentarian is bound by his vote-catching pledges. In any case, you have seen what Hughes’s pledges are worth!

“Exemptions are promised in essential industries, which, we are told, the Government will prescribe. **What guarantee have you that the Government**

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will prescribe yours as one? And even if it did, 'a special tribunal will determine the amount of labour necessary.'

"Beware of tribunals. Their history in New Zealand and Great Britain shows how merciless they are. You surely had sufficient experience of tribunals in Australia last year. Tribunals mean that you will be placed in the hands of magistrates whose chief aim is to order as many workers as possible into the army.

"In the interests of yourself, of your valuable industry, and of the nation at large, you must vote 'No' on 20th December."

Then, there is another leaflet reading—

"OUR UNIQUE RECORD.

"It is claimed by the advocates of conscription that Australia has not yet done enough! That this great continent, sheltering behind the protecting arm of the motherland, has failed to render adequate support to the Empire in her hour of direst need. Here again only the facts need to be stated. **Australia has done more proportionately than any other allied country.**

That is an indisputable fact, and yet it is struck out by the censor.

"She has also practically accomplished the impossible. Never before in the world's history has a nation of less than five millions of people, men, women, and children all told, raised an army of its picked males and transported them 13,000 miles to the fighting front. This Australia has done, and entirely at its own expense, for it must never be forgotten that Australia bears the whole of the cost of the raising, feeding, clothing, equipping, transporting, and paying of its soldiers from the time of enlistment until their final repatriation. Further, the men we have put into the field have not only proved themselves at least the equal of any other soldiers in the world in valour, in initiative, and in staying capacity, but they are the best paid fighting force on earth to-day. Over 400,000 men have volunteered in Australia for military service abroad in two and a-half years. Of these, 380,000 have been accepted, and either sent forward to the war zone or are now waiting in camp for the necessary transports."

Mr. MACARTNEY: That is not so.

The TREASURER: I can assure the hon. member that those figures have been very carefully revised. The circular continues—

"Then, what of our navy? Is it forgotten that upon the outbreak of war Australia placed the whole of its navy and its naval resources and equipment unreservedly at the service of the Imperial Government? That navy, small though it necessarily was—it had only been established a few years—was of the most modern type, and quickly proceeded to give a good account of itself. Surely, no Australian has yet forgotten the brilliant capture of the German raider 'Emden.'

"All this has been accomplished under voluntarism. Who can truthfully say voluntarism has failed? Who, with the story of the deeds of our brave Austra-

lian lads at Gallipoli, Pozieres, and Flanders still ringing in their ears, dare smirch the honour of Australia to call her shirker or coward? Who dares to say Australia has not done enough? Who dares babble of the need for conscription?

"WHAT OF THE RETURNED SOLDIER?"

"Undoubtedly the vote to be taken on 20th December means more to the men who have already returned from the front and those tens of thousands more whom we all fervently hope will yet return, than to any other section of the community. Australia has made certain very definite and very emphatic promises to her soldiers. Every other nation in the world's history that ever engaged another in conflict has done the same. Yet it is a matter of common knowledge that no nation ever yet honoured its promises to the broken heroes of its military exploits. The bonds between the nation and the maimed and wounded victims of its wars have always and for ever been treated as 'mere scraps of paper.' Who has not seen the battle-scarred warriors of the Crimea medalled and beribboned adorning English street corners peddling sundries or reduced to the ignominy of begging alms? **Australia cannot and will not keep her pledge to our brave lads at the front unless she, realising now the absolute sacredness of that pledge and the imperative need for at once making provision for its redemption, votes conscription out with a mighty 'No.'** Wealth can only be produced by the application of human labour-power to the earth's great natural resources; it cannot be garnered by wizardry from the skies. Money must be raised by taxation or by confiscation. **Yet we are deliberately asked by those who urge conscription to destroy at once both our powers of wealth-production and our opportunities for taxation. If we force tens of thousands more of our able-bodied male wealth producers from our shores who will produce the wool, the metals, the wheat, and meat, those essentials not only to the upkeep of Australian industrial life but to the most pressing needs of the Empire itself? If conscription is carried, either our staple industries must languish (as in New Zealand to-day) and the Empire be thereby deprived of its greatest war needs—munitions and food or the Australia labour conscripted for military service abroad must be replaced by cheap foreign labour as is now actually being done in other allied countries. A vote for conscription will therefore be an act of base treachery to the 'boys' at the front: firstly, because it will be depriving them of food and munitions which they need more than they need reinforcements; secondly, because we shall impoverish the nation and render it incapable of satisfactorily repatriating those who, at the termination of the war, will ul-**

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timately return to their Australian homes; and lastly, because we shall have demolished those comparatively excellent Australian wages, terms and conditions of employment which existed when they left our shores and which it is our sacred duty to preserve inviolate till they return. The nation has most unwisely agreed not only to pay heavy interest for money loaned by the wealthy classes for war purposes, but to exempt it from taxation. Thus, with the one hand we are piling up the load of future interest which must be paid, while with the other we decrease our available source of taxation. This is vicious in every way, but in none more so than in its treachery to the returned soldier. Those who to-day put their cash into war bonds will tomorrow be able to sit with folded arms free of all liability to our returned heroes and the duty of their proper repatriation. On the other hand, those individuals and companies who keep their capital invested in legitimate industry and thereby keep the wheels of commerce moving, thus enabling the country to maintain its industrial activities, will have to shoulder an ever increasing burden of taxation. Leading financial authorities, banking magnates, and others have denounced this terrible blunder, because they know it leads either to national bankruptcy, repudiation, or confiscation. **You should vote 'No,' because if conscription should be carried it means the sure and certain repudiation of Australia of our honourable contract with the returned soldiers. Vote 'No.'**

Those leaflets and that pamphlet are couched, as you will have noticed, in moderate language. (Opposition laughter and dissent.) Those pamphlets were issued containing facts which can be placed before the people for their easy assimilation. The people should judge for themselves as to whether they will follow the advice of those pamphlets or follow the advice of the supporters of conscription, and surely they are able to judge for themselves. Now we have the situation that one political party, the conscription party, has the right to say what the other party shall say about conscription or not; that is exactly the position to-day. The leader of the Opposition attempted to create false impressions about the attitude taken up by the Chief Secretary, as though the Chief Secretary was basing his criticism on some petty officer directing the censorship in the newspaper offices. The censorship is what is being complained of, and the censorship has been used at the dictation of William Hughes, under the influence of the inspired Press supporting conscription.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Where is your proof?

The TREASURER: The proof is patent to any man of ordinary intelligence that these censors are acting under instructions from Melbourne, because they all act with wonderful uniformity of policy as to what they cut out. That does not come about by any exercise of their own discretion. They are being dictated to by somebody who desires to mislead and to dragoon the people into voting for conscription. It has been stated

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that the censorship has been instituted for the purpose of safeguarding the peoples' interest, and in the interests of military necessities. It could not be defended upon any other basis whatever. It could not be defended upon any political basis, and the only possible justification for any limitation of the freedom of the people or the taking away of their rights must be based upon military necessity. But in this case we are asked to give away great rights which centuries of British people have fought for, without any military necessity existing whatever. The British Empire is supposed to be fighting, and is fighting undoubtedly, on the side of oppressed peoples, fighting for liberty, for the freedom of Europe, and fighting against military oppression, and in order that we may do our share we are asked to submit ourselves to the same military oppression and to industrial slavery. We are asked by "Billy" Hughes and his gang of conscriptionists to have imposed upon us the worst form of military tyranny, the greatest limitation of freedom, that could be sought, allegedly all in the interests of the Empire in the fight in which it is engaged. The real intention of the conscriptionists can be easily seen by those who are not blind. The real intention is to hand over this young democracy of Australia into the hands of the exploiters, into the hands of capitalists, and the tools of capitalists in power in the Commonwealth Parliament. While they have those men in power, while they have the control of the military machine in Australia, and while they have the extraordinarily wide powers of the War Precautions Act, they see an excellent opportunity to destroy unionism, and to take away the liberties of the people which have been built up by years of endeavour. They have an opportunity of handing over the workers to a kind of chattel slavery. If that kind of thing is endorsed by the people of Australia, if conscription is carried, we may say goodbye to all the high ideals for which we have so long fought. White Australia will go in a fortnight. The eight-hour day will no longer exist, and unionism will exist in name only, and in the interests of democracy I sincerely hope it will not be carried.

Mr. BARNES: Do you really and sincerely believe that?

The TREASURER: I sincerely believe that, because I have seen the unmistakable tendency towards it and I have read lately the sinister views of interested persons, which leaves little doubt as to what they desire. I believe that the real intention behind the conscriptionists—I am not speaking now of the poor, misguided fools who are following the capitalists; I am not speaking of the rank and file of the conscription party who will live to bitterly repent of their support of conscription; but I am speaking of the big, cunning capitalists and those they are behind—and I say their real intention is to bring about a kind of subjection, military and industrial, for the purpose of enabling a greater exploitation of labour. Let me quote from a few representative statesmen in the different parts of the British Empire in regard to conscription. Mr. Lloyd George, speaking at Manchester, before they had conscription in England, said—

“What we want is not compulsion for the army, but compulsion for the workshop.”

That is what "Billy" Hughes wants in Australia to-day. Colonel FitzGeorge, son of the late Duke of Cambridge, said on the 26th August, 1915—

"Compulsory service was necessary at this time when the people were getting out of hand."

It has been alleged by certain members opposite and certain capitalistic newspapers that the people in Australia have been getting out of hand. The "Saturday Review," on 21st August, 1915, said—

"Conscription is required as much for the effect it will have upon miners and munition workers, as for the part it will play in the actual raising of the armies."

Colonel Maxwell, in the "London Outlook," in September, 1915, said—

"Trade unionism is imperilling our existence, and by its action a rot of our nation has set in. One remedy, and one alone, can eradicate this state of rot. Martial law will cure it."

But let us get down to some Australian opinions regarding conscription and its effect on the workers. Speaking in the Senate on 6th May, 1915 ("Hansard," page 2889), Senator Bakhap said—

"I say we should have conscription, and pay the conscripts 1s. 2d. per day."

While Mr. J. Cook, speaking in the Federal Parliament on 10th May, 1916 ("Hansard," page 7770), said—

"Another reason why conscription should be adopted is that it would mean the saving of . . . money."

Addressing a conscription meeting at Killara, Mr. H. Y. Braddon stated, on 26th August, 1916, that—

"Universal service is not confined to services in the trenches. . . . Those who are not accepted for the front must render whatever service they are called upon to do at home."

While the Brisbane "Telegraph," on 18th November, 1916, made this exceedingly pertinent remark—

"There remains in our midst a powerful enemy called political trades unionism. . . . The political trades unionist is the man to be dealt with, both before the end of the war and afterwards. . . . Voting 'Yes' by a majority will be the deadliest blow ever dealt to trades unionism."

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The TREASURER: Note, too, a recent utterance by Mr. Fuller, late Acting Premier of New South Wales, at Rose Bay, on 31st October, 1917—

"It was time the Federal Government did something. . . . If it was necessary . . . martial law should be proclaimed. The Federal authorities ought to be strong enough to do it."

All those opinions show a tendency in one direction. They want conscription, not for the purpose of reinforcing the armies in France, but for the purpose of bringing about a military subjection in Australia, and setting up a kind of chattel slavery from which the workers will not recover for 100 years. As an evidence of the extraordinary kind of censorship which is being carried out, and which this motion is intended to

protest against, let me quote another case. A Brisbane newspaper recently intended to publish the following paragraph on a subject of facts relating to the State Insurance Office—

"The other day the State Insurance Department committed a heinous crime in the eyes of private enterprise. It could have saved paying £600 to a widow by taking advantage of a legal technicality, and did not."

That was censored by the military censor. Does any hon. member say that the publication of that would assist the enemy? Would that prevent the raising of recruits, or in any way militate against the success of the British Empire in the war in which it is engaged? That was intended for publication in a Brisbane weekly newspaper; the article was set up, and submitted to the censor, who refused to allow it to be published.

Mr. VOWLES: How do you know? It has just been handed to you now.

The TREASURER: I have known the facts of that case for some time, and if it came to the test, I would be more capable of proving it than the hon. member was capable of proving recent statements of his. Let me finally say that I regard this question as one involving the essential rights of the people of Queensland, and the people of Australia. It is not a question involving the loyalty or disloyalty of any hon. member. No man dare say that any man on this side is disloyal. We all subscribe to the war policy of the Empire. We all realise that the ideals for which the Empire is striving are ideals we can support, but the fact that we support those ideals does not justify any authority on earth taking away from the people the rights and liberties which have been fought for and established under the British Constitution.

Mr. MACARTNEY (Toowoong): I do not think in the history of this Chamber so much abuse has ever been made of its forms as has occurred on the motion introduced by the Premier. The Empire is engaged in a war of defence, a defence just as much in the interests of Australia as any other part of the British Empire. The conduct of the war is, as far as Australia is concerned, in the hands of the Commonwealth Government, and the Commonwealth Government has set out certain conditions which are necessary for the protection of the interests of the Empire. Amongst other things, we have the War Precautions Act, which was introduced by a Labour Government then in charge of the affairs of the Commonwealth. Everything that has been done to-day is done under the provisions of that Act—that is to say, it is done under the authority of Labour. If there is anything being done that is not right to-day, it is done under the power created by Labour. It appears to me that if Labour does it, it is all right, but if anybody else does it, it is all wrong. Under the War Precautions Act certain regulations were made in regard to the publication of matter which might prove detrimental to the interests of the Empire. A censorship has been established, perhaps in every part of Australia. Amongst other places, it has been established in Brisbane. The Premier, in his individual capacity, carrying with it the kudos of the position he occupies, addressed a meeting a few nights ago, and a part of his speech apparently has been

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censored, although he has offered no evidence or details in proof of it, and he, although sworn to support constitutional authority, is one of the very first to rebel against the carrying out of those things that are necessary for the protection of the Empire. Having sworn allegiance to His Majesty, having sworn the ordinary oath of office, he is the first to do that.

The PREMIER: I observe my oath of office.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I can only come to one conclusion—that this motion has been introduced, not for the purpose of complaining against the action of the censor, so much as to get an opportunity of promulgating, at the expense of this State, that matter which was read to the Chamber this afternoon by the Treasurer per medium of "Hansard." I hope that in some way or other that nefarious attempt will be foiled. I think that we stand somewhat in a humiliating position.

The PREMIER: You certainly do.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. gentleman said that the action of the censor was illegal and unlawful.

The PREMIER: That is my opinion, and my opinion is pretty well as good as the next man's, too.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. member omitted to give this House particulars to lead it to the knowledge that the censor did that which he has alleged. He has made the bald statement that the censor interfered with the report of his speech so as to produce a certain result.

The HOME SECRETARY: How do you account for the fact that in the first and second editions of the "Standard" there are variations.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I am not accounting for anything. I am just pointing out the fact that this is the first time during the course of the debate, so far as I know, that the "Standard" has been mentioned as the paper in connection with which the

[7 p.m.] censorship took place. That is what I complained of—that the hon. member has not given the House the details of the censorship complained of. Apparently, the "Standard" newspaper is the paper which has furnished, or is supposed to have furnished—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Premier has not said anything of the sort.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I am only going on the interjection of the Home Secretary.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Guessing, the same as you are.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I may be guessing, but I am complaining of the fact that I have to guess. This House ought not to have to guess in matters of this sort. There is a disposition on the part of Ministers, including the hon. member who interjects, to place matters before the House without giving the House the fullest information, and we have the bare allegation only from the Premier that this has taken place, and on that bare allegation we are asked to pass this lofty motion which appears in the Premier's name to-day, a motion which is a reflection on the Commonwealth Government—all that on the flimsy statement of the hon. member. And when all has been said and done, what does the censorship mean so far as the speech

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of the Premier is concerned? It amounted to leaving out certain figures, or certain references to figures in connection with the number of men who had been recruited, the number of men who were away at the front, and the number of men who were available as reserves. I must say that, listening to the Premier, I wondered whether we were listening to the commander in chief or to a man who knows as much of military matters as I do myself, and that is not very much. The hon. member puts himself up to criticise military figures, and the position which those figures create, as though he were a high military authority, and I suggest that he takes too much upon his shoulders. I am not going to discuss those figures now. I have other matters to speak upon. But let us look at the other matter specially mentioned by the Premier, the statement by this senator from South Africa. Well, surely, that is hardly sufficient to justify the Premier in denying obedience to action which has been taken under regulations made under the War Precautions Act, an Act provided by the Federal Labour party for the protection of Australia. The mere statement is that it has been alleged that Australia was the only country in which conscription or universal service did not operate. The answer to that was, "That is untrue, because South Africa is in the same position."

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: Canada is in the same position.

Mr. MACARTNEY: And on account of that simple contradiction we have this motion brought forward as a justification for defiance of the War Precautions Act. Why, is it not well known that South Africa has not been called upon to any extent, at any rate, to furnish men for fighting overseas because they have been fighting in their own land, and because the coloured natives are fighting in South Africa, as well as the white people who are there? There is no comparison whatever between the two countries, but, for that mere little difference, we are engaged in this discussion. Now, the hon. member said that it was illegal and unlawful for the censor to do what he did. Well, if it was illegal and unlawful, the hon. member had a method of dealing with the matter without dragging the business into this House, a method personal to himself—or the paper affected. He or it could have appealed to the courts. He could have appealed to the courts, for protection against what he alleges is the unlawful action of the censor.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You have no right to use the "Standard's" name.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I only take the interjection of the Home Secretary for what it is worth. That is all the information I have.

The HOME SECRETARY: I will give you more information. It is all the papers.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I do not care which it is. Take the "Standard," for the sake of argument. They could have taken action against the censor or the Commonwealth, if it is illegal, as said by the Premier. So far as I know, he has never hesitated to seek the decision of the courts in matters in which it suited him to do so. He could have taken another course, if he was loyal to his country and desirous—(Interruption.)

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Which he is.

Mr. MACARTNEY: That other course is that he could have protested against the

action of the censor, not by interviewing the reporters, but by official communication to the censor or the Commonwealth, and that official communication could have been published.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They would not publish it.

MR. MACARTNEY: He could have communicated with Mr. Hughes himself.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: He did.

MR. MACARTNEY: Or he could have communicated with the Minister for Defence, not by a short telegram referring generally to the matter—not framed for the purpose of making political capital—but a communication forwarding all the details of the matter, and thus it could have been ascertained what the attitude of the Defence Department or the Premier of Australia was going to be. He could then have come forward in this House with some show of propriety, with some information and documents which would, at any rate, tend to awaken the interest of hon. members. I am prepared to admit this—that there is a great deal attached to free speech, and there is a great deal attached to the freedom of the Press, but, if it is going to be a question of the safety of the Empire, I say that the safety of the Empire, so far as everyone of us is concerned, is more to us than those two great principles. If the Empire once goes down in this fight, then good bye to liberty and freedom in Australia. If we want to have free speech, if we want to have a free Press, let us first of all protect Australia and preserve that liberty which we enjoy at the present time.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do you not think we can do both?

MR. MACARTNEY: No; we cannot hesitate in the moment of danger. While we are bickering over these things, other things are happening. Things of the greatest moment. And yet we are here engaged in mere political fighting from day to day, instead of putting forward our utmost strength in the cause of the Empire. It has been so chronic with the Minister for Lands, so chronic with the Premier, that they do not realise what the position is, and they go on scratching just in the same old way instead of coming out loyally and putting every ounce that is in them into work for the benefit of the Empire.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: How many ounces have you put into it? Nothing but scratching all the time.

MR. MACARTNEY: The hon. member knows that by the policy they are following they are keeping members in the House engaged night after night, week after week, in defending the country against the insidious attacks of the Government and their supporters. (Government laughter.) No man can do more than one duty properly, and we are prevented from taking as full a part as we would like to take—

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You are too busy attacking the Government.

MR. MACARTNEY: It is because the Government are creating the position. That is the trouble. But I am not going to continue that line of argument. I have said that there is a great deal to be said for the freedom of speech, for the freedom of the Press, and it may very well be said that the censorship is arbitrary. It probably must be arbitrary if success is to be attained, and

it may be that it cannot be carried out without mistakes. Mistakes must be made, whatever is done, and I think for that reason alone the Premier might very well have remonstrated, have communicated with the authorities before he took the course he has taken. I also am of opinion—I suppose many hon. members on both sides of the House are of that opinion—that we do not get all the information we ought to get, and some of us think that the country ought to get more information, and that it would be better for the country if it got it. But if we have entrusted the country and the management of the country to a constituted authority, and if that authority, after looking all round, having better means of information than we have, has come to a decision, then I say that in this moment of danger we are bound to trust that constituted authority. It may be that we have over zealous censors. It may be that we have not as competent censors as we ought to have, but that is a matter that can be remedied, and the Premier, in the high position he holds, is in the best position to get anything of that sort remedied by communication with the constituted authority.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What about that Insurance Commissioner business?

MR. MACARTNEY: I say frankly that the thing is unintelligible to me. If the thing has happened, on the face of it, it is a total and absolute absurdity. I do not wish to argue this matter, but I say that the Premier has his way of doing things. What has he done? He has elected to bring down a motion to this House to create a debate which enables him, I say disloyally and improperly, to get before the country—

THE SPEAKER: Order! Order!

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Withdraw! Withdraw!

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member is out of order in using that expression.

MR. MACARTNEY: I say it is not a loyal thing to do. I say the Premier, of all men in this House, ought to be loyal to constituted authority.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I rise to a point of order. I think the hon. member ought to be asked to withdraw that statement. He has accused the Premier of the biggest crime of which a member could be guilty.

THE SPEAKER: I ask the hon. member for Toowong to withdraw the expression "disloyal" as applied to the Premier.

MR. MACARTNEY: I withdraw the word "disloyally," but I still say it was not loyal to the constituted authority to take the action which he has taken. Loyalty to constituted authority suggests that he ought to have proceeded in the way I have mentioned.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: So he did.

MR. MACARTNEY: I say he did not. He sent a telegram to the Prime Minister couched in limited terms, framed for the purpose of getting political advantage more than anything else.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You put yourself in his place and see what you would do.

MR. STOPFORD: Are you prepared to send a wire to the Prime Minister protesting?

THE SPEAKER: Order!

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Mr. MACARTNEY: I say that by coming to the House with a motion which he has put forward to-day, by collusion or giving approval, if you like to use that term, to the action of the Treasurer in reading those documents which were read this afternoon, and for which the Treasurer has stated that he, as chairman of the anti-conscription committee will take full responsibility, and which he also stated had been censored or largely censored—I say that by doing this the Premier has not taken the course which is loyal to constituted authority. I say it is an improper course, and the Premier must accept the responsibility for every word contained in those documents read to the House. I take it from the Treasurer that he admits the Premier should, and does take, the responsibility of the contents of those documents. I take it that members of the other side of the House, to the last man, endorse them.

The TREASURER: Hear, hear!

Mr. MACARTNEY: I say that those documents are full of insidious misrepresentations and untruths.

The TREASURER: No.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I say that the contents of those documents are calculated to mislead the public.

The TREASURER: Not so.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I say that the contents of those documents provide arguments just as strong against voluntary recruiting as against universal service, and I say that by the contents of those very documents hon. gentlemen on the other side have shown their hand. They have shown their attitude in regard to voluntary recruiting just as much as they show their hands in regard to universal service. (Government interruption.)

The TREASURER: They uphold voluntary recruiting.

Mr. MACARTNEY: By the contents of those documents, hon. gentlemen on the other side must be judged. The Premier must be judged for conspiring to allow the contents of those documents to go into "Hansard" for the purpose of circulation in defiance of constituted authority.

The TREASURER: No; under the authority of constituted authority in this case they will be circulated.

Mr. MACARTNEY: It may be under the authority of constituted authority so far as this State is concerned; but it is defiance of the Commonwealth authority, which is greater than the State, and which has full responsibility for the conduct of this war. The hon. gentleman also, in making his speech, showed that, at any rate, that he had no justification whatever for stating that the censorship was in any sense political; because he was particular to make the statement, by way of interjection, that the censor was probably instructed.

The TREASURER: I have not the slightest doubt he is instructed from Melbourne.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Showing a want of knowledge on his part and a want of justification for making the statement which he did in regard to Mr. Hughes this afternoon. I say that the material which has been introduced in this Chamber for the purpose of circulation per medium of "Hansard" will have the effect of seriously interfering with that part which Queensland, at any rate,

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should play in the war. It will seriously interfere with recruiting. It will, to that extent, seriously prejudice the interests of the Empire which is fighting in defence for its very existence.

The TREASURER: The launching of conscription did that.

Mr. MACARTNEY: It is a mean desertion of the men at the front. (Government interruption.) I decline to accept the statement made by either the hon. gentleman or the Premier with regard to the opinions of the men at the front. I believe there are men at the front that have the same political opinion as the hon. gentlemen on the other side.

Mr. PAYNE: Ninety per cent. of them.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I don't believe it. I believe that when the result of the referendum comes to be known the large bulk of the men at the front will be true to their country; and that is more than can be said of a lot of people here. (Government interruption.)

The TREASURER: They will be true to their country and turn down conscription if they get a fair deal.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The Premier, in connection with this war—from the very commencement of it—has posed a lot, but he has done very, very little. He practically posed this afternoon as knowing more in connection with the Australian divisions at the front, and the needs of those divisions, than General Birdwood. I say such a position is absolutely absurd and should not weigh one pennyweight with any citizen of Queensland. The amendment that has been moved by the leader of the Opposition gave gentlemen on the other side an opportunity of expressing themselves, if they are loyal at heart, if their hearts lie with the Empire, and if their sympathies are with the men at the front; but I think the chances of hon. gentlemen voting for this amendment are particularly remote, because they have not up to the present juncture acted in consonance with the spirit to be implied from the amendment. It will be rejected; but, when it is, it will be a record upon which the people of Queensland can judge the Premier and his followers on the other side.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): I rise to oppose the amendment that has been moved, and to support the motion. I support the motion because it embraces the wider principles on which all good government is founded. In voting against the amendment I take to myself all the responsibility of any charge that the hon. member for Toowong or anyone else may level at me of disloyalty. To be considered disloyal by that hon. gentleman would not in any way disturb my peace of mind; because I recollect that in defining "disloyalty" the man who is defining it is the man who, only lately, was a shareholder of a very large company which supplied meat that eventually got to the German trenches. I have mentioned that time and again in this House. I have placed the names of the shareholders in "Hansard," and if he looks it up he will find them there.

Mr. MACARTNEY: You prove your statement.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: I gave him the facts at the time. I was speaking on the Meat Bill and they are in "Hansard."

Mr. MACARTNEY: I rise to a point of order. The hon. gentleman has stated that I am a shareholder in the Australian Meat-works.

Mr. STOPFORD: No, he didn't; he said you were at one time.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I desire to say that I have no shares or interest in it.

Mr. STOPFORD: No; but you had at one time.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MACARTNEY: I never had.

Mr. STOPFORD: You had at one time.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: If the hon. member had listened to my statement he would not have found it necessary to do what he did. I quoted him as being at one time a shareholder in that company.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I never was.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: I referred him to the authority where he could find it. Now, in speaking to this amendment, I consider that it is one of the greatest import to this State. The doctrine of freedom of speech cannot be too preciously guarded by the Australian people, coming, as they do, from the British race, who fought so hard to win that privilege. To deny the right of freedom of speech to anyone is to take up a very illogical attitude; because speech is only the result of thought, and thought can never be controlled, can never be trammelled by any force outside the man in which that thought arises. So to-day we find we are living as a free people, speaking freely, because of the indomitable spirit of freedom that was originally born in us and which has overcome all the tyranny, all the oppression, all the torture of emperors, kings, tyrants, and of kaisers. As British people, we are proud of that freedom, and this House cannot be too careful to see that the freedom of the people of Queensland and their right to free speech remains inviolate, and that the sacred right of the freedom of the Press shall also be maintained. In all ages, in all stages of barbarism right down until the outbreak of this war, we have seen that the autocrat—the rulers—have always attempted to stifle freedom and the free expression of opinion. Until lately that has been rendered impracticable. It is only now, when we have a Prussian war on, when we have one of the most glaring examples of what a system of militarism can do, that we are faced with the fact in Australia for the first time of knowing that the glorious privilege of liberty and freedom is taken away from us. I am sure everyone will recognise the right of this Parliament to stand in defence of the sovereign rights of the State. Now, with regard to the censorship. What has been the result in Queensland, Australia, and in the Empire, since the outbreak of this war. Nothing can justify the strictness with which it has been administered in Australia. It is even stricter than it has been over in Great Britain. I say that, as far as the censorship goes, it has reached a mark where the limit of endurance for free people has come to an end and I hope that this protest will be taken notice of and that the people in authority will recognise that they have come to that limit. All the people are complaining about it. A conservative gentleman, the Hon. Joseph Carruthers—speaking in Sydney the other

day on a vote of thanks to Sir W. Irvine—is reported in the Sydney "Daily Telegraph" of the 9th November, as saying—

"After vigorously attacking the Government for the rigid censorship and its manner in keeping back the allied disasters as if the people were little children, exclaimed, 'The greatest enemy we've got is the censorship.'"

I agree thoroughly with Sir Joseph Carruthers that the greatest enemy and the greatest hindrance to the proper prosecution of this war has been the rigid censorship; in making that statement, I attack the principle and not the men who are administering the censorship office. I know one of those officers particularly well, having served with him, and he is as fine a soldier and a gentleman as is to be found in the Empire; but, at the same time, the principle is wrong, and he is just the military instrument in carrying out the operations of that department and the principles of the department. They are attempting to keep the people in the dark for a certain purpose. The Sydney "Bulletin" some time ago protested against the rigorous Press censorship, and pointed out that they were practically raising a military dictatorship while the men who did it had power to call the troops out and use them, and to close the Press from any criticism or any investigation of their actions. There is not the slightest doubt that the censorship is hiding a good deal that it would be well for the people of Australia to know. It has been hiding the operations of the various military departments. It has hidden a good deal of bungling, waste, and mismanagement. It also has been hiding the incompetency of the Commonwealth Government to fulfil the bogus pledge that they gave to the people at the last election—that they were out to win the war. Mr. Hughes,

[7.30 p.m.] in coming before the people on this occasion said, "We seek no excuse for coming before them; the menacing situation that has arisen has forced us to do so; and we would have proved ourselves not only inept but treacherous if we had not done so." He would like us to believe that the reason is the Italian disaster and the falling away of the Russian forces in this great war. I want to point out that Mr. Holman, when speaking in Sydney on the 3rd November, as reported in the Sydney "Daily Telegraph," said—

"Before I left England the present crisis in Italy was anticipated, but it has come as a thunderbolt to Australia. The situation in Russia was known, and its effects were foreshadowed months before we in Australia knew anything about it."

Mr. Hughes, in speaking at one of those gatherings, said—

"I speak not at hazard but as a member of the Imperial Council, to whom all the information at its disposal is communicated."

Hon. members will recollect that it is some seven weeks since Mr. Holman was in England, and the Italian crisis must have been known to Mr. Hughes and other Ministers then, and they took no action. They said then that the voluntary system was fulfilling all anticipations and keeping up reinforcements, and now they say it is because of the menacing situation that has arisen that conscription is necessary.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: It is owing to the menacing situation of the National party.

Mr. H. L. Hartley.]

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: Yes, it is owing to the menacing position threatening the little Welsh atom masquerading as Prime Minister. It is the result of the agitation of Sir William Irvine and the Universal Service League in the South, who have never been satisfied with the result of the last referendum. It was their continued agitation that brought about this referendum. I have here a copy of a motion that was moved in Sydney by Dr. Long, Bishop of Bathurst, which reads as follows:—

“That this meeting of citizens of Sydney is convinced that in order to keep faith with the Empire and our men at the front it is the plain duty of Australia to adopt conscription.”

In supporting that motion he said—

“This is no time for finessing with some grovelling pledge or other.”

Just fancy! No time for finessing with a solemn pledge given to the people of the country on a great question like conscription. It was meetings like that that forced William Hughes to put the present question of conscription to Australia, and not because of any need of the Empire, and not because of any failure on the part of Australia to fulfil her obligations to the boys in the trenches at the present time. As I shall show later from Mr. Pearce's own statements, there are reinforcements available for the Australian troops. Mr. Pearce said the divisions have never been under strength. Now, I want to point out something else in connection with this matter that should be noted among all this talk on menacing situations. I want to draw attention to the strength of the allies as quoted by various authoritative speakers on this question. The army of Great Britain, including 1,000,000 from the overseas dominions, totalled 6,500,000. In September the United States Government gave a return showing that their army on the 21st November totalled 1,300,000 men. On the 30th July the High Commissioner for France, in a letter to the Under Secretary for War of the United States, said, “France has to-day 3,000,000 soldiers in the battlefield, or 1,000,000 more men than when the war started. We are certain, with the resources of our metropolitan and colonial depôts, to maintain that number at the present strength for a long time to come.” Russia has 7,000,000 men, and Italy, despite her disaster, has 2,500,000, while the Roumanian, Servian, and Belgian forces bring the totalled allied forces up to 21,000,000 men in the field at the present time. And if hon. members will recollect there is a cable in the Press yesterday stating that America is making active preparations to put 3,000,000 fully equipped soldiers into the field. On the authority of the military expert for the “Times,” the German, Austrian, Turkish, and Bulgarian forces total 11,000,000 men, or a difference in favour of the allies of 10,000,000 men. If you eliminate for the time being as useful factors the Russian forces of 7,000,000 and the 1,000,000 German troops who have always to stay on the Eastern frontier, then the allies always have 4,000,000 more men in the field than the Central Powers. Although I would not for a moment attempt to minimise the grave situation in which the Empire finds itself. I want the public to be levelheaded, look at facts as they are, study them, and do the best thing we can for the Empire, and not rush blindly on as New Zealand has done

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and deplete our country of its men and perhaps lose the war in the end through being unable to supply the allies with the food they need, which is such a big problem both in England and France to-day. In addition to these troops, France has to-day 6,000 heavy guns as against 300 when the war commenced, and an adequate supply of smaller guns. In fact, they have one for every nine yards. France has given 800 heavy guns to the allies besides equipping the Belgian, Servian, and Grecian armies. That is the authoritative statement from the High Commissioner for France in the United States. I wish to point again to other cheering factors while the people are talking about the menacing situation, and while this Welsh atom masquerading as the Prime Minister is calling us all sorts of names, such as traitors, shirkers, pro-Germans, and everything else he can lay his tongue to. It is just as well that men should know what the facts are before they come to a decision. Sir Eric Geddes, the First Lord of the Admiralty, gave some cheering information the other day. He said that the shipping situation in the European waters has been better than it has been for some months past, despite the fact that the Italians have been driven back on the Tagliamento. Sir Eric Geddes said—

“Notwithstanding the huge munition production and the reduction to a minimum of man power, in 1917 we will have naval and mercantile tonnage practically equal to the best year ever recorded in our history, and in 1918 it will certainly be very much greater. The output of naval craft during the last twelve months was three to four times as great as the average annual output preceding the war.”

Brigadier-General Geddes, who is in charge of the other arm of the service in England, makes the following remark in the “Courier” of Saturday, 17th November:—

“I am entitled to say that the war was won, or nearly won.”

Who is most entitled to know—the Minister for Military Service, whose duty it is to raise the military forces and to see what man power, what munition power, what industrial power, and what food supply are at the command of a nation and her allies—who is in the best position to say what the situation is in this war? That man, charged with great responsibilities like that, or this gentleman who some time ago was deadly opposed to the men with whom he is now associated politically and who, for political purposes alone, are associated with him at the present time.

Mr. BAYLEY: For national reasons.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: What nonsense! For national reasons! Everybody knows that there was absolutely nothing national about it. It was because he failed to bludgeon his old party into his own way of thinking that he was received for the time being with open arms by the men with whom he is at present, and now this present campaign is an evidence that they want to jettison him because they do not want him. It is to Sir William Irvine, the future Premier of the Commonwealth, if he can carry these conscription proposals, to whom Australia will look in the future. With regard to Mr. Hughes's statement—we have heard it not only from Mr. Hughes, but throughout the country from recruiting ser-

geants and others—that we have deserted the soldiers in the trenches, that we have failed to send reinforcements, I would point out that I have had nephews and cousins over there since the war started—certainly there is only one left now—and the information from them did not convey that idea by any means, and I say it was a slander on the generous loyalty of the womanhood and manhood of Australia to say that they have failed the Empire in her hour of need. I want to quote some figures in this connection. Mr. Pearce, Minister for Defence, in the Town Hall at Sydney on the 1st November, as reported in the “Daily Telegraph,” gave the total enlistments at 380,000; the total casualties 114,000 men; which leaves a balance of 266,000 trained fit men. Six divisions—five in France and one in Palestine. If you take away the sixth division, and I emphasise the sixth division in spite of any denial that has been issued, because if anyone will turn up the speech that I gave in this House on the Address in Reply some months ago they will see from the figures which I quoted from an authoritative source that there are six divisions in the fighting line at the present time. I will prove that from Mr. Hughes’s and Mr. Pearce’s own statements. If you take away these six divisions from 266,000 men you will find that you have 146,000 men left for reinforcements; that is with five divisions in France and another division in another place. If these 146,000 men are not available to reinforce the six divisions at the front, then whose fault is it? To whom should the charge be laid? Not to the people of Australia; not to the manhood of Australia, but to the men who did not send these reinforcements to the place they were supposed to go and who deviated them to some other purpose. We were told at the last referendum that there were only five divisions in the trenches. I want to point out that we were never asked for five divisions. It was only those politicians who went over the mark and gave more men out of reinforcements than accumulated than they should have given, taking into consideration the man resources of the State. We were never asked by Great Britain to put these five divisions there. It was simply because reinforcements had accumulated to such an extent in Egypt and other places that they were sent to the front eventually, and when we had this last referendum forced on us we were told that we would have to find reinforcements for five divisions. Now, in relation to this sixth division, Mr. Pearce, as reported in the Sydney “Daily Telegraph” of the 1st November, said this—

“There were five divisions on the western front and the equivalent of one mounted division on the frontiers of Egypt.”

Does that not show that there are six divisions? What is the good of trying to fool the people into thinking that there are only five divisions? Any man reading that article knows that there are six divisions. Again, Mr. Hughes, in his Bendigo speech, as reported in the Sydney “Daily Telegraph” of the same date, said—

“Our object now, as then, is to keep our overseas forces—the five divisions in France and the troops in Palestine and elsewhere—up to their full fighting strength.”

I do not know where elsewhere is, and I do not think it matters, but that shows clearly

that there are six divisions—five in France, and another in Palestine on the frontiers of Egypt. Why should that information be censored from the people? Why should people be maligned and called traitors and pro-Germans, and other names, because a politician has perhaps blundered, and sent too many troops into the firing line as main troops. I know there are other units operating besides those troops, and if Mr. Hughes and his officers oversea have wrongfully used the reinforcements on other work, and to take up other duties, then it is not the people of Australia who should be charged with betraying the interest of the boys at the front, because without wastage they would have had 146,000 troops there now, or enough for about twenty months, if the original intention of five divisions had been adhered to. The real betrayal lies at the doors of the administration of the Defence Department, who have used the men who were sent to reinforce the boys in the trenches for some other purpose. If those reinforcements which had been supplied last year from Australia had been used only for five divisions, there were enough to have taken the whole five divisions out of the front lines, and replace them with new troops, and let those lads come away home for a spell I hope after this we will hear very little more about the betrayal of the boys in the trenches, and the slackers in Australia, because there are very few cowards among the British race, and it comes to an infinitesimal number when you come to deal with Australians. Now, Mr. Hughes says voluntary recruiting has failed. He has to say that, because he is pushed on by the forces of capitalism that are behind this movement. He says there are 300,000 single men, of whom he and his statistician estimate 150,000 are fit single men, and that is where the reinforcements will be drawn from under his proposal. If anyone will look up the last “call-up,” they will find that the rate of exemptions totalled somewhere in the vicinity of 50 per cent., so that would leave about 75,000 men to fulfil Mr. Hughes’s proposal, and they would last, at the outside, eleven months, and then the total of the single fit manhood of Australia would be depleted, and depleted unnecessarily, because in the reinforcements already enlisted there are enough for twenty months if they had been used legitimately. Not only South Africa not conscripted, but Canada is not conscripted either. Canada has passed a Bill through Parliament for conscription, but that Bill has not yet been put into operation, and the Government have to face a general election, and it is very likely that the Government that brought in that Prussian-like measure will be defeated. Let us look at a British country that has adopted conscription, and see what the position is there. New Zealand has introduced conscription only some twelve months ago, and the position there is now that they have called up all their single fit men, and on the 29th of October last they called up the first draft of the first division of married men—that is, men married, but without children, and 5,000 of those are to go into camp in the early months of next year. When we are talking about single men in Australia, although Mr. Hughes has promised that the married men will not be conscripted, Sir William Irvine said personally he was not in favour of exemptions at all. They made

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the same promise in New Zealand, and yet we have the fact that married men are being called into camp there now. Here is another utterance of Sir William Irvine, which goes to prove that Mr. Hughes may not be able to keep his promise, even if he has the inclination to do so. In the Sydney "Daily Telegraph" of 2nd November, he says—

"Personally, I am against exemptions; the obligation of service should be in any capacity irrespective.

"They had long ago agreed to maintain five divisions at the front. It was then thought a fine achievement.

"They now had to realise it was very much smaller than Australia's share. Australia was not shouldering one-half of its responsibilities as compared with Great Britain."

It is very evident that if Sir William Irvine, who is the real agitator and the real engineer of this conscription question, gets his way, Australia's contribution will be doubled, and not only will single men be exhausted in eleven months, but married men will be probably in practically the same position. There is another matter I want to draw attention to in connection with this "Win-the-war" Government which made such fine promises. Under cover of the Press censorship, what has been the position? It is only a little while back hon. members will probably remember seeing in the columns of the Press that the Labour "Call" was prosecuted. Why? Because they published the fact that the Prime Minister had withdrawn the prohibition that had previously operated against German firms trading under Japanese names in Japan. Was there any disloyalty in that? Was there anything likely to help the enemy in that? No. It was only to show up the political administration for the time being in power in Australia, and so it was censored. But because the Labour "Call" dared to defy the censor, and dared to tell the people of Australia that the Hughes loyalty only went as far as removing the prohibition against German firms trading under Japanese names, it was prosecuted. I think it is well that any paper should have the courage to let the people know what was being done in that direction. I say that the censorship is interfering with the liberties of the Press. The freedom of the Press has been called the palladium of the Constitution. It is one of the finest engines of public safety that people can enjoy. It has built up practically the freedom of the people and has succeeded in bring about reforms when orators and soldiers have failed and, therefore, we cannot be too careful to see that their privileges are not trenching upon under the heel of a military dictator. What has been the position in England with regard to the operation of conscription, and why should it be hidden under the cloak of censorship? If men do these things, why should it be hidden? I have in my hand a copy of the "Tribunal," London, Thursday, 16th July, 1916, and I find that under conscription thirty-four death sentences were passed on Britishers in France. Why? Because of disloyalty? No. Because they believed in a God, and their religious faith was such that their conscience would not allow them to fight. Altogether 1,451 men were imprisoned on various terms of imprisonment from three months to ten years,

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because they were conscientious objectors, and objected to fight. I want to read one or two particulars before my time is up—

"COMMUTED TO TEN YEARS' PENAL SERVITUDE.

"In spite of the repeated assurances of Mr. Tennant as to the impossibility of the death sentence being inflicted on conscientious objectors in France, we received on Thursday, 22nd June, news that on the previous Thursday, at Boulogne, four conscientious objectors, who had been court-martialled for refusing to obey military orders, were sentenced to be shot.

"The four men were Messrs. Marten, Scullard, Foister, and Ring. On the date mentioned above the regiment was drawn up and the men paraded for their sentence to be pronounced, the court-martial having been held some days previously. It is said to have been an impressive and solemn function.

"The court-martial sentence of death was pronounced by an officer, after which there was a pause, and then came the announcement of the subsequent commutation of the sentence to ten years' penal servitude."

"SENSATION IN THE HOUSE.

"Immediately the news came to hand on Thursday it was taken to the House, and caused a sensation among the members. Mr. Barnes, who does not agree with the conscientious objector as such, raised the matter on the motion for the adjournment. He said: I desire to ask the Under Secretary a question of which I have given him notice. It is in reference to a report current in the lobbies to-night that four men in France have been sentenced to death. These men are stated to be conscientious objectors, and there is a very general feeling of resentment or alarm that after the many statements which have been made from the front bench in regard to the treatment of these men, and the promises which have been made about them: being turned over to the civil power by the military, and the assurances that these men would not be sent to France at all—it is somewhat alarming that a report of this sort should be current. I cannot believe it is true, and I merely raise the question now to give the right hon. gentleman an opportunity of assuring the House that this particular report is not true. I hope he will also give an assurance that something will be done by which public feeling may be allayed in regard to this matter.

"MR. TENNANT'S IGNORANCE.

"Mr. Tennant said the great majority of rumours of the treatment of conscientious objectors were untrue, and this, he assumed, was one of them. He had no information on the subject, but he believed it to be wholly untrue. He would be glad to give the House full information when he had investigated the matter. These men were soldiers and must be treated as such. It was quite true promises had been given in relation to this matter, and it was quite impossible that desertion in the face of the enemy could occur in regard to non-combatants. There is no intention of dealing with

them in any way harshly, and there will be no question of their being sentenced to death."

"LETTER FROM THE CONDEMNED MEN.

"The following are extracts from a letter from Mr. H. C. Marten:—"On the evening of Thursday, 15th June, I heard the result of the court-martial. It was read out at a local camp before a large body of men. The court found me guilty of the charges brought against me, and sentenced me to suffer death by being shot. This drastic sentence, however, was commuted to one of penal servitude for ten years. Similar sentences were passed on the three conscientious objectors tried at the same time as myself. I am still at the F.P. Barracks, and have not yet heard anything as to when and where I shall be removed. Through all I have been supported by a sense of the deepest peace, and humbly conscious of my own unworthiness to bear my small share of testimony to the teachings of our dear Lord, and thankful for the blessing of His Holy Spirit. Naturally I think long and often of all the dear ones, and sincerely hope that before being confined to prison I may be given the opportunity of seeing one or more of you, but as yet I know nothing of the future."

Here is another extract on the same question.

"MR. TENNANT'S HUMILIATION.

"In Parliament on Monday afternoon Mr. Morrell asked the Prime Minister whether conscientious objectors now serving in France had been sentenced by court-martial to be shot, and, if so, whether these sentences had been commuted.

"Mr. Tennant, who replied, said it was the case that courts-martial had sentenced certain men with conscientious objections to death for offences punishable by death.

"Replying to Mr. Chancellor, Mr. Tennant said that wilful disobedience of orders, though not in face of the enemy, was punishable by death."

Not only were those sentences commuted to ten years' penal servitude, but those conscientious objectors were subjected to a good deal of rough treatment and illusage while in the hands of some military officers, and this is the case of Mr. C. H. Norman who was court-martialled. This is one of the things he speaks of when he was court-martialled and put into a military prison in charge of a military officer. These are some of the remarks he makes—

"Mr. Norman then went into the witness box and gave evidence of his treatment. He said, 'I was put into a straight jacket on two occasions for over twenty hours, and during that time I became unconscious. I was in the hospital for seven days, and was brought out to parade. I declined, and was put on a bread and water diet. Then I made a hunger, thirst, and sleep strike for forty-eight hours. For two nights I walked about my cell, and then found I could not go on. So I went on with the hunger and thirst strike, and was forcibly fed on two occasions. It was perfectly impossible for any man with self respect, or who calls himself a gentle-

man, to obey the orders of the commandant. He called me a swine, a beast, and a coward, and I have not uttered a discourteous or uncivil word to anyone, notwithstanding the treatment I have had. I have been spat at by the commanding officer three times."

And then he goes on to detail other particulars of his treatment, but the point is that eventually it was admitted that the officer who had treated him in that way was removed, on account of the disclosures made. The paper adds—

"The 'Daily Express' of 1st July contains an interview with Colonel Reg. Brooke, late commandant of Wandsworth Detention Barracks, in which he admits that the War Office removed him because of his treatment of C. H. Norman."

Now, I want to point out that in England information of this description is circulated. In the Glasgow "Forward" of some time back cases of that kind were printed, and yet it was not declared to be

-[8 p.m.] helping the enemy, but I am pretty certain that if they were printed here the censor would suppress them, because it is up against the system under which they are trying to enslave the people of Queensland under the guise, under the bogus plea, of helping the Empire. Now, the same thing has occurred in a lesser way in New Zealand. Mr. Payne, the member for Gray's Inn, brought up in the House the case of a man who was sentenced to eleven months' imprisonment because he was a conscientious objector and would not carry out certain orders. That man had been through the hands of four doctors for throat and chest complaint. He should never have gone into camp at all, and when he did go into camp he should have asked to be excused on the ground of being unfit, but the way in which conscription is being enforced in New Zealand was so harsh that he did not make complaint. But he was a conscientious objector, and at the present time, unless he has been recently released, because the matter was ventilated in a discussion on the report of the Medical Director-General, he is serving a sentence of eleven months, because those people thought he should not have a conscience, or only a conscience that would allow them to use him in any way they liked. I say it has come to the time when all men who have made a stand for the liberties of England, when all men who are descended from those men who compelled John at Runnymede to sign Magna Charta, to face the issue and stand for the precious heritage of the liberty of England, of the liberty of Australia. I say that it is up to all Australians, not only to turn down conscription, but to see that all other instruments of suppression are removed, to say that they will not, while the lads are away fighting for freedom overseas, allow themselves to be Prussianised in this State of Queensland. I have much pleasure in opposing the amendment.

Mr. FORSYTH (*Murrumbidgee*): I should be sorry to weary the House with a great deal of arguments that are absolutely alien to the motion before us, such as have been used by the hon. member who has just resumed his seat. The hon. member mentioned that there were 146,000 men still available. We have the figures of the Premier

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of 209,000, and allowing for 100,000 for five divisions, that leaves 109,000 men competent to carry on the reinforcements for the next eight or twelve months.

The PREMIER: Not eight or twelve; six—ten months.

Mr. FORSYTH: Very well. He says 109,000, and the hon. member says 126,000. What does the speech of the hon. member who just sat down really mean? Or what does the speech of the Premier mean? It means that there is not the slightest occasion for any reinforcements at all.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. FORSYTH: It means that there is no cause for conscription either—we have sufficient men, they say, to carry us on for the next eight or twenty months. Therefore, what is the good of getting any more men? We need not go on getting reinforcements, voluntary or otherwise. I am very sorry indeed to know that a good many of the speeches have been very bitter. I am very sorry to think that that is so, more particularly in connection with a thing of this sort. We are all supposed to be members of one Empire, we are all supposed to be in the same boat, and if we belong to one Empire, and if Great Britain and her allies are defeated, then only one thing will happen.

The PREMIER: We are all in one boat, but you are rocking the boat.

Mr. STOPFORD: So sit down. (Laughter.)

Mr. FORSYTH: If I am not in the same boat, I am very sorry. I think I am just as British as the hon. member. I think that all these speeches are so much fireworks. The hon. member talked about what are we wanted to do instead of sending men to the front. He said that we ought to give them supplies. If the hon. member would only look at the papers he would recognise that we have in Australia at the present time about 1,500,000 tons of wheat from the last harvest which we cannot get away, and we have another big harvest on. We have infinitely more stock than we can get away.

Mr. CARTER: Then how are you going to get the men away?

Mr. FORSYTH: We have not the tonnage to get that stuff away. Our trouble at the present time is that there is an enormous quantity of stuff being produced and purchased by Great Britain and her allies which we cannot get away. Therefore, there is no good in our discussing the question of food supplies. The argument that we need to supply them with foodstuffs is simply absolute nonsense. The amount of vessels used for the small number of men who are going away is a mere bagatelle in comparison with those needed for the enormous quantities of stuff we want to take away at the present time. Of course, we know that if men are to go to the front there must be vessels to take them, but the argument that we need to grow foodstuffs is all nonsense. With regard to conscription and voluntary service, I say that whatever we may think—and we are only laymen after all—it is clear that reinforcements are wanted. When the Premier went to London, the cry of the men in the trenches twelve months ago was, "Send us reinforcements." That is the message he brought back from France when he was with the boys at the front. General Birdwood says that we have only four divisions at the front,

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and that the fifth has been withdrawn to be kept in reserve. Does anyone say that men like Birdwood, who is beloved by all the Australians whom he is commanding, is going to make a statement like that unless there is some truth in it? You may have 100,000 men available, but those men are not competent to go into the trenches. You have to send them home, and when they are there they have to be trained. We have to bear in mind also that the losses are simply enormous.

Mr. STOPFORD: What is your opinion of the censorship? You are away from the motion altogether.

Mr. FORSYTH: I say, with regard to the censorship, that if anything is likely to be put in print which will affect the country and the good of the country it has no right to be put in print. The Treasurer read the whole of a pamphlet this afternoon, and I say that there are any quantity of statements in that pamphlet which are absolutely untrue, and if I were in the censor's place I would have censored the whole lot, more especially the one he spoke of first. The Premier's speech is a very different question. It is quite mild in comparison with the statements made by the Treasurer. I hope that the censor will censor them in "Hansard" so that the people will not get the benefit of reading such stuff, because a great many of the statements are absolutely incorrect, and he will be doing his duty in censoring the whole lot of those documents. That is my humble opinion. I say that the whole lot of those statements are made in order to inflame the passions of men, for the purpose of getting them to believe something that is untrue, and that is something that nobody should do. If they were true, we could not say anything about them, but I say that anybody who reads them must know that those arguments are not correct.

Mr. STOPFORD: Will you be honest enough to say that there is to be a referendum on conscription?

Mr. FORSYTH: Of course.

Mr. STOPFORD: Of course, but the censor will not allow any newspaper to publish that fact.

Mr. FORSYTH: We are not discussing that now. We can discuss it in a general way, but the argument is that certain statements in the speech of the Premier delivered in the Centennial Hall were censored. His idea was that they were censored because the officer had distinct instructions from the South. I do not believe that. He knows, or should know, in his capacity of censor, what statements should be left out and what should be allowed to go in. He should be competent to judge what is the right thing to do.

Mr. CARTER: He is not competent.

Mr. FORSYTH: Of course, if the hon. member says he is not competent, that settles it in one act; that ends the matter for ever. Now, we have heard a great deal about freedom of speech, and there has been a great argument raised in connection with that matter. As a matter of fact, that is part of the motion moved by the Premier this afternoon. In connection with the liberty of the Press and the liberty of the subject, there is no such thing in any constitutional Act in Great Britain. I am quoting now from Professor Dicey. I don't suppose hon. gentle-

men will say he is wrong. He is one of the ablest constitutional men we have living. This is an article written by him on "The right to freedom of discussion." He says—

"Most persons form such loose notions as to English law that the idea prevails in England itself that the right to the free expression of opinion, and especially that form of it which is known as the liberty of the Press, are fundamental doctrines of the law of England in the same sense in which they were part of the ephemeral Constitution of 1791, and still are embodied in the articles of the existing Belgian constitution; and, further, that our courts recognise the right of every man to say and write what he pleases, especially on social, political, or religious topics, without fear of legal penalties. Yet this notion, justified though it be, to a certain extent, by the habits of modern English life, is essentially false, and conceals from students the real attitude of English law towards what is called 'freedom of thought,' and is more accurately described as the 'right to the free expression of opinion.' As every lawyer knows, the phrases of 'freedom of discussion' or 'liberty of the Press' are not to be found in any part of the statute-book nor among the maxims of the common law."

Of course, we know there is some freedom of speech, but there is no constitutional statement of it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Who said there was. It is established by precedent and practice.

Mr. FORSYTH: Now, what do we find here? It says—

"Every person who commits a misdemeanour, who publishes (orally or otherwise) any words for any document with a seditious intention."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Do you say there is nothing in the British Constitution except what is written?

Mr. FORSYTH: You may have it not in the Constitution; you may have it in the common law. It says this—

"When once, however, the principles of the common law and the force of the enactments still contained in the statute-book are really appreciated, no one can maintain that the law of England recognises anything like that natural right to the free communication of thoughts and opinions which was proclaimed in France a little over 100 years ago to be one of the most valuable rights of man."

It also quotes the views of Lord Mansfield, who says—

"The liberty of the Press consists in printing without any previous license, subject to the consequence of law."

Says Lord Ellenborough—

"The law of England is a law of liberty, and consistently with this liberty we have not what is called an imprimatur; there is no such preliminary license necessary; but if a man publish a paper, he is exposed to the penal consequences, as he is in every other act, if it be illegal."

At twenty minutes past 8 o'clock p.m.,

Mr. BERTRAM took the chair as Deputy Speaker.

Mr. FORSYTH: I think that whatever concerns the nation as a whole should be placed under the control of the National Government. That, I am sure, no man will object to. We all know that for a long time after the war started Great Britain was absolutely against conscription. They carried on for a long time without it, and they were forced to go in for it if they wanted to save their skin. There is not the slightest doubt that the war is not in too good a way. The hon. member for Fitzroy talked about the millions and millions of men we have, and all that sort of thing. He referred to France and Russia. What is the good of them to us? So far as Russia is concerned, she has been our great weakness, and we thought she would be our great strength; as a matter of fact, we all know that if Russia had only stuck to her guns this year, probably the war would have been over by this time, instead of that she collapsed.

Mr. COLLINS: If you had had freedom of the Press, Russia might have been in the war.

Mr. FORSYTH: There is nothing but chaos in Russia. Germany is still very strong. She has a large quantity of Russia, a considerable portion of France, the biggest part of Belgium, half Roumania, and practically the whole of Serbia. I say the more men we can get the better it will be. What would the Italian army have been able to do with 400,000 or 500,000 more men? It might have turned the whole scale of the war. I hope before long the Americans will send over a large number of men. They are not there yet. I was speaking to an American who had just come back from America, and he told me that the total number of soldiers who had left for the front was about 100,000, and they hoped to get another couple of thousand there very soon.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: They cannot get ships to send them there.

Mr. FORSYTH: They cannot get a million men there in five minutes, but they are getting the loan of shipping from Japan, and they are using the German ships which they secured when America declared war. They are also building very fast, and we hope that the terrible losses made by submarines will be made up to a certain extent. After all, this is only a pure piece of fireworks. I say that the Federal Government should be better able to judge what men are wanted. The Treasurer read a letter from a boy at the front. I have seen letters from lots of boys at the front, and every one of them stated that we have not half enough men there, and we want more men. So you see there is a difference of opinion with regard to these matters, the same as with the others. No one can possibly object to the amendment moved by the leader of the Opposition. Will anyone in this House not say that, in the opinion of this House, it is imperative that the fullest support should be rendered to the Federal Government?

Mr. COLLINS: That means conscription.

Mr. FORSYTH: Are we supposed to know what is the best thing to do for the Empire? We don't want information that may be of benefit to the enemy to be published. The hon. gentleman will see at a glance, if he will read the report in the House of Commons, and even in France, that often questions are asked about certain things and the replies almost invariably are, "We cannot give the information because it might be of

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benefit to the enemy." It does not matter whether something is stated by a man strongly in favour of conscription or against it. Anybody that makes a statement which is likely to be in any way opposed to the best interests of the country, in connection with this war, should not be allowed to circulate it; it should be censored. The hon. member for Fitzroy talked about there being no conscription in South Africa. He appears to forget that the people in South Africa have been fighting for the last three or four years in their own country, and they are still fighting. He also talked about Canada. They have already passed conscription in Canada. If there was no conscription in any country in the world it would be all right; but you have it in Germany and you have it in Austria. The very fact that they can get every single man that they require placed them at a very much better advantage than the country that does not do it. We don't want to give Germany or any other country any advantage against us. It has been the cry from the very jump that more men were wanted. If the hon. member will only think of the terrific losses sustained by the British and French in the first days of the war when we had a few men there—a little army which was called a contemptible little army, which was the finest body of men that ever lived or ever fought—he would see how necessary it was. Because we had not the men the Germans were able to get nearly into Paris. We should have been prepared as they were. As a matter of fact, Lord Roberts was going round the country for years before the war started for the very purpose of endeavouring to show the people the necessity for being prepared; but they would not listen. So far as protesting against the action of the censor for the purpose of political capital, I am not likely to give my vote for it. I most emphatically say that whatever is necessary to be censored should be censored. The censor, no doubt, in connection with that particular speech referred to, thought that he had just cause to censor it. I am sure some of the pamphlets read out this afternoon by the Treasurer contained statements which were misleading and absolutely foreign to the truth; and it was done for a certain purpose. I sincerely trust that when "Hansard" comes before the censor he will deal with it in the way he thinks fit.

Mr. STOPFORD (*Mount Morgan*): In following such an expert in wire entanglements as the gentleman that has just resumed his seat, I feel a little diffident in addressing myself on this subject. (Laughter.) I desire to say that that hon. gentleman, following the practice of those who have spoken from the Opposition benches—either designedly or through neglect to study the question before the House—absolutely refused to apply himself to the question that the House is discussing. The hon. gentleman's speech was merely an effort to bolster up an advocacy of conscription. He absolutely refused to associate himself with, or justify the Prime Minister's action in suppressing the freedom of speech, which the action of the censor clearly shows is the intention of the Prime Minister in the present conscription campaign. The amendment is striking in one particular—that it has been moved and seconded by physical rejects. The leader of the Opposition is a physical reject as far as military enlistment is concerned. We quite realise that the hon. gentleman has done his "bit" inasmuch as

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he has taken certain troops to Egypt and pointed the way to the firing line. I believe that the hon. gentleman for a considerable number of years enjoyed the privilege of playing at Sunday soldiers in Queensland in the Defence Force. Perhaps he is not fitted to be in the firing line, but what I object to is that he, or any other man who is not capable of sharing the dangers of the front trenches, should use his influence or his vote to send other men into a position that he is not capable of taking himself. (Hear, hear!) The hon. member for Dalby, who seconded this amendment, in reply to an interjection of mine stated that Dalby had given a majority of 700 in favour of conscription, and when I stated that they were represented in this House by an eligible he said he was not eligible. That is the position that confronts the people of Queensland and of Australia to-day. The amendment moved by the leader of the Opposition and seconded by the member for Dalby is clearly an effort to draw a red herring across the trail. They desire to say that they are anxious to support the Federal Government in any proposal that they may make to win the war. I believe that every person in Australia is anxious to assist the Federal Government in any legitimate effort they may make to win the war, but when they endeavour to cloak their desire to see the workers of this State and of Australia conscripted for service overseas, when they desire to defeat the object that prompted thousands of unionists in the State to volunteer for service overseas—I say that many of the men who are fighting in the front trenches of France to-day volunteered clearly with the desire to break down the Prussian military system that ruled in Europe. They had no suspicion when offering their lives in defence of a principle that they believe in, that they were leaving Australia in the hands of physical rejects who would use their opportunity to so enslave the workers of this State, that when they returned after having done their duty in a foreign country they would find the military yoke waiting for them in the country that they left free when they went to fight in order to free other nations who were unable to free themselves. The leader of the Opposition in his speech supplied us with a certain amount of food for thought. He told the Premier that he was claiming something he was not entitled to. He told him that he was claiming a freedom that we as British people never possessed. He told him that he was claiming something that we had from our childhood been taught to believe that we possessed; that was the right to freely express our opinion on any matter of public interest, and yet the leader of the Opposition said that the Premier was claiming something that he had no right to claim. What are we to take from that? We are to take this: either that the Premier of this State gave utterance to sentiments foreign to the ideas of loyalty that should regulate the speech of any man during a crisis of this description, or that we have been deluding ourselves into the belief that British liberty gave us something that we have no right to expect. If the Premier's speech in the Centennial Hall was of such a nature that it places him outside the bounds of those who should be regarded as loyalists, surely the laws of this country would be able to deal very effectively with him. But we find that the law has not been put into operation. At a time when the public mind is anxious for

food to enable it to arrive at a decision on an important national question, we find that the Premier and other speakers are permitted to come forward and advance certain arguments, but those arguments are not permitted to reach those who are beyond the reach of their voices, that the military censor who is supposed to merely regulate the utterances of public men and the thoughts expressed in the Press in the interests of the Empire; that this military censor is utilising his position to bolster up one side of a very important national question. A statement of that description deserves some justification, and if justification is needed it will be found in the fact that the Premier delivered a speech in the Centennial Hall, speaking for a large section of the Queensland public—if we are to judge by their decision on this question on the last occasion it was placed before them—speaking on behalf of a majority of the people of this State; echoing the sentiments of the majority of the people as expressed at the recent referendum—the Premier uttered certain statements and what do we find? The people throughout the State, who are actually waiting for a lead from the leader of political thought in this State, are deprived of an opportunity of taking their lead from him because a certain military censor draws his pencil through the remarks of the Premier. If the Premier had uttered sentiments against the interests of the Empire, perhaps the military censor would have been justified, but to show you that the utterances of the Premier were not contrary to the interests of the Empire, you have only to look at the newspapers of Brisbane one or two days after the Premier delivered his address. There you will find a Press report of a speech delivered by Mr. Groom, a Federal Minister. Mr. Groom is not only reported fully in the arguments that he used in favour of conscription, but Mr. Groom is allowed to contradict statements that the Premier made but which were suppressed in the report of the Premier's speech. Not only has the censor utilised his position to mutilate the Premier's address, but he has utilised his position to permit Mr. Groom to refer to certain figures as given by the Premier without giving the public any opportunity of knowing whether the Premier made those statements or not. We are told that the whole of our British institutions; that the whole of our liberty and our boasted British freedom depends upon the successful termination of this war. I want to know whether actions of that description are actions that will promote continued loyalty during the present crisis. We must realise that we are engaged upon a fight that could be carried on without any bitterness; a fight which, if the interests of the Empire were considered, would be carried on without any bitterness; that no matter whether conscription became an accomplished fact or whether it was defeated, our efforts in this war would not suffer. What do we find? We find that hon. members opposite, in reply to the Premier, have tried to show that this motion has been introduced merely because the leader of the party had a certain amount of censorship applied to his speech. I wish to show that that censorship is not confined to any individual. The censorship is at work in every effort the anti-conscription committee of this State are making to place their views before the public of this State. While the hon. member for Murrumba was speaking, I

asked him did he believe that a conscription fight was raging in Queensland, and he stated that certainly there was a conscription referendum campaign going on. I want to state to-night publicly—I want it to go forth to the public—that I challenge any newspaper in Brisbane to come out to-morrow with a heading that there is a conscription referendum being taken in Australia. They dare not do it because they have already received instructions from the military censor that they must not use the word "conscription"; that they must use the words "reinforcements referendum." The military censor has laid it down that every newspaper—Liberal or Labour—must adhere to his instructions in that respect. Not only has he done that, but every article that appears in the Press must be submitted to the military censor. The Premier has shown this House how certain utterances of his have been subjected to the blue pencil of the censor. The censorship is robbing the people of this State of the necessary information to enable them to arrive at a clear decision on this matter of life and death to themselves, and to those who may come after them. The military censorship extends to a greater degree than it did in regard to the Premier's speech, because the Premier's speech only affected the people who read the metropolitan Press. The censorship is imposed on every article that appears in any paper in any part of the State. To show how absolutely ridiculous the censorship is, I desire to quote one or two censored articles that have been prevented from being published in a certain newspaper in the State. I have no desire to mention the name of the paper, because if I did it is a well-known fact that that paper might not see the light of day again. The "Brisbane Daily Telegraph" printed an article some time ago, and when a certain newspaper wished to reproduce it this week, the censor put his blue pencil through it. The article is as follows:—

"Take, for example, the brutally outspoken expression of the Brisbane 'Telegraph.' 'The political trade unionist is the man to be dealt with, both before the end of the war and after. Voting 'Yes' by a majority will be the deadliest blow ever dealt to trade unionism.'"

A certain newspaper in Brisbane endeavoured to reproduce that to show that as far as the "Daily Telegraph" was concerned, their desire to see a majority vote in favour of conscription was based upon the fact that they believed it would be a deadly blow struck at the existence of trade unionism. The military censor offered no objection to this paragraph appearing in the "Telegraph," yet, when another newspaper sought to reproduce what had already been permitted, the military censor placed his red pencil through it. In another issue of the paper we find that the newspaper in question sought to place before the people the idea of their editor on one important point in connection with the present referendum, and he wrote as follows:—

"Single men first is the preliminary order under an Australian conscription scheme, but 'married men, get ready,' will follow only a little less speedily than the echo of the first order."

That has been censored also. Everybody who has studied the position knows we are advo-

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cating that. I will not hesitate to tell the people that from every platform I appear on that immediately the single men are conscripted the married men must follow—(Hear, hear!)—and Billy Hughes and his military censors may do their worst. Because we honestly believe that such a rickety individual as Hughes cannot tell the truth if he endeavoured to do so, and because we truthfully say, when he made those promises, we believed he was lying to the people, because we endeavoured honestly in the Press and on the platform to give effect to our belief, the military censor places his red pencil through it, and we are powerless to express our desires to the people. Here is another case. The article reads—

“It is as wrong to seize men and compel them to take life against their will as it is to seize women and make them bear life against their will.”

That is the logical belief of the man who wrote that, and yet the military censor states that the whole existence of the Empire depends upon his placing his red pencil through that particular article. There is no man who has followed the daily Press but will admit that we are constantly told that the allies are becoming stronger every day. We are told that the introduction of the American forces into the war gives a certain predominance of men to the allied forces fighting on the various fronts, and yet, when this newspaper endeavours to tell these things to the people of this State the military censor again operates. I am going to read another paragraph that the military censor interfered with—

“The allies already have an enormous superiority in men; the comparatively few more soldiers that compulsion in Australia would add to the vast armies at the front would be like the proverbial drop in the ocean.”

The military censor cut that out. Is that not a reasonable article? Hon. gentlemen opposite may be perfectly justified in saying that every little will help. We state that the whole resources of Australia could not have a reasonable bearing on the termination of the war. Yet, while hon. members opposite and the Press supporting them are free to make their arguments day in and day out, when a newspaper solely out in the interests of anti-conscriptionists dares to publish what the other newspapers have been publishing, but with a different meaning, day after day the censor comes along, and with his red pencil scratches out the paragraphs. There is another article here in which we refer to the complex method in which the question has been placed. It is something that has been discussed in all the Sydney newspapers. I was in Sydney a fortnight ago, and when the Prime Minister placed his proposal before the people, Sir William Irvine addressed a public meeting in the Town Hall, and denounced the Prime Minister and all the other Ministers, and there was no censor invoked. But immediately the Queensland newspaper standing in the interests of anti-conscription endeavours to show how misleading the question before the people is, the censor applies his red pencil through the article, and we are powerless. There is another matter I desire to draw attention to, something that is appearing in the British Press. There is nothing of a revolutionary nature in the extracts that

I have read and which have been suppressed. They are all along the lines that you can hear in every “pub.” tram, and train in the State. Every extract I have read that the military censor has suppressed I am prepared to repeat from every public platform in the State, and I intend to repeat them. In England we find they are printing something of this description—

“‘In France,’ said the late Minister for War, ‘unionism is dead.’ The following facts were given by M. Merheim of the French Metal Works’ Union. He says: In France to-day there is—

(1) A twelve to fourteen hour day in all factories.

(2) Sunday work—a seven-day working week.

(3) Cheap women and child labour. Chinese and Portugese have been introduced in thousands.

(4) Conscript labour under martial law.

(5) No limitation of profits while the cost of living has soared upwards, while wages have fallen on the average from a quarter to a half the pre-war figure.

(6) An obedient working class—gaol or the front trenches for the discontented and the strikers.”

That is an extract from an English paper, reprinted in the “International Socialist” of Australia.

Mr. BAYLEY: What is the English paper?

Mr. STOPFORD: The “Labour Leader.” I understand. There is more in that particular paragraph that needs suppression if suppression is necessary than the whole of the articles I have quoted. Here is another article, headed “Chinese labour advocated,” and the censor has put his red pencil through it. Here are definite statements to show that a certain individual in Melbourne, speaking on conscription, said he would send every white man out of Australia and he would reinforce the industrial army of this State by black, brown, or brindle, and yet when we say “Chinese labour advocated,” the censor places his red pencil through that heading and we are powerless to give to the public the facts we have gathered from various States of the Commonwealth, and the censor has practically prevented us from giving to the people this particular piece of information. The paragraph reads—

“The meaning of these words as applied to Australian conditions really is: If conscription is imposed, all our virile, well-informed unionists will be despatched to another continent. Then, perhaps, with an anti-White Australia Government in power, the exigencies of war may be made an excuse for hanging up the White Australia policy, and Chinese could be brought in to exemplify both cheapness and docility.

“Workers should heed the warning. When the enemies at home go to the length of making such a base suggestion, there is all the more reason why not workers alone, but all those trades and businesses which depend for their existence largely on the patronage of wage-earners should determine to defeat the conscription proposals. Businesses are

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not built up, trades are not made busy and prosperous by the presence in any white population of a large number of aliens who work for low wages and who have an inferior standard of living."

Now, I defy any hon. members opposite to say that any of the statements contained in that article can be regarded as likely to defeat the Empire in the present war. Yet the censor has taken upon himself to mutilate that article by running his red pencil through it. What I want to say is this: I am not prepared to-night to discuss the question of conscription or anti-conscription. I am prepared to take my place outside this House and to make my statements in regard to conscription and its likely menace to Australia on every public platform I appear on. I am prepared to give the Prime Minister and the officers of the Defence Department every opportunity of dealing with me as they desire for any mis-statements I may make, but what I do say is this: If they claim the right to bring me up for any false statement I may make, and to ask me to bear the responsibility for that false statement, I claim equally with them, as an Australian, as one of those who have been taught to believe that the men who are spilling their blood in Europe are spilling it for something worth while retaining, I claim the right that if I am to be tried for any false statement I may make that I shall equally have the right that any true statement I make shall reach not those within the reach of my voice, but those from one end of Australia to the other who are waiting for information to decide a question that will regulate not only their life, but the life and destiny of every Australian who will live on this continent after we have gone. I claim this: that unless that freedom of speech is given to us, unless we have the right that men have suffered, that men have gone to gaol, to obtain for us, unless we as a people in Australia are prepared to sacrifice everything for the retention of that right, then I claim that the war in Europe will not be a successful war, even if our armies be successful, if we sacrifice that which so much suffering has been given to obtain for us by so many generations who have gone before us.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MURPHY (*Burke*): I do not propose to detain the House very long in dealing with this question. I think it is a pity that a question of such importance should have been introduced into this Chamber in a purely party spirit. I think the question of the censorship might very well have been dealt with from the national standpoint; and, from the national standpoint, I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that the censorship has been simply scandalous.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MURPHY: But have we heard one single word from hon. members sitting on the other side of the Chamber? Have we heard a single word in Parliament [9 p.m.] from the Labour party, who have controlled the destinies of Australian States since the outbreak of war, in connection with the censorship?

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: Yes.

Mr. MURPHY: We may have heard an individual opinion, but it was not until the

Queensland Premier's speech was mutilated by the censor that Parliament was asked to take any action in connection with the matter. There was a very effective method of putting in a protest against the action of the censor. Shortly after the outbreak of war the Labour party took control of the National Parliament. From the very day that war was declared a censor was placed in the telegraph offices.

Mr. SMITH: Not for political purposes, though.

Hon. J. A. FIEHELLY: And he censored cartoons which he knew had already been printed.

Mr. MURPHY: I have pointed out to hon. members that, in my opinion, the censorship in Australia has been scandalous. I am not going to go back on that opinion. But I am not going to come to Parliament and vote for a purely party motion. I say that, so far as Australia is concerned, so far removed from the theatres of war, the censorship need not have been so far-reaching as it has been.

Mr. DUNSTAN: You are a good George Reid.

Mr. MURPHY: Nobody has been able to do the "Yes-No" business better than the hon. member, and I may have learned a wrinkle or two from him. We might have looked at this question from a national standpoint, and tried to induce the powers that be to relax the censorship.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: A sovereign State trying to induce!

Mr. MURPHY: The hon. member has referred to the fact of a sovereign State. How often have we heard that the Labour party in this State and the Commonwealth are one? The Labour party controlled the Federal House for three years. Why did the leaders of the State Labour party not point out to the Federal Labour Government, whc, I presume, controlled the censor, that his actions were too far-reaching? We know that almost since the outbreak of war the newspapers of Australia have condemned the censorship; but what steps have been taken to alter the position? It is merely the same to-day as it has been since the outbreak of war.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: Not at all.

Hon. J. A. FIEHELLY: Fancy cutting out the fact that the State Insurance Office gave £100 to a widow!

Mr. MURPHY: Have not politicians had their speeches dealt with by the censor before? I know that since the outbreak of war censors have cut out a lot of things which should have been given to the public.

Mr. PETERSON: They did not cut out Hughes's speeches.

Mr. MURPHY: Probably he makes such excellent speeches that there is no need.

Mr. PETERSON: He is king to-day.

Mr. MURPHY: If he is king to-day, he was king considerably over two years ago. (Hear, hear!) He was a prominent member of the Labour Government. He followed Mr. Fisher in the Prime Ministership.

Mr. LAND: He was never king until he rattled.

Mr. Murphy.]

Mr. MURPHY: It is very amusing to hear hon. members who used to cheer Mr. Hughes a few years ago, who used to tell us what a magnificent man he was—

Mr. PETERSON: He used to cheer you.

Mr. MURPHY: Nobody used to cheer me.

Mr. WEIR: "A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind."

Mr. MURPHY: I generally get about sixteen interjections. I shall deal with them seriatim. (Laughter)

Hon. J. A. FIEHELLY: General Kuropatkin.

Mr. MURPHY: Well, probably if General Kuropatkin had not come down and saved the Morgan Government the Assistant Minister for Justice might not be in Parliament to-day, which might have been a good thing for the Minister for Justice and certainly would have been a good thing for the State.

Mr. DUNSTAN: You are balancing yourself well.

Mr. MURPHY: Being a newspaper man, like the hon. member, I am able to do a bit of balancing. And I remember that the hon. member was able to do a little balancing. He was supporting us at that particular time against the "Worker" and the Central Political Executive. However, that has nothing to do with the question before the House.

Mr. ROBERTS: There was no censor then.

Mr. MURPHY: Oh, yes! there was a censor on me. The Central Political Executive censored me, and that ended it. (Laughter.)

Mr. COLLINS: And now the late president and you are in the same boat.

Mr. MURPHY: Of course, and I would sooner stand with the late president of the Central Political Executive, who at that particular time was not very friendly to myself, in the defence of the Empire than I would stand with those who are not with the Empire in its present hour of trouble.

Mr. COLLINS: What the devil have you done in this war? You have sacrificed nothing, not even your little finger. (Laughter.)

Mr. MURPHY: However, hon. members have brought forward this motion, not so much because they desire to see the Australian Press and the Australian people freed from the censorship, but because they desire, under cover of this motion, to deal with a question now before the country, to utilise the pages of Hansard to place their views before the country. I am not blaming them for taking advantage of the Parliament journal to do that. That is a fair proposal.

Hon. J. A. FIEHELLY: They censored that last year.

Mr. MURPHY: Well, sometimes it may be necessary, in the interests of the Empire and in the interests of Australia, to censor some of the speeches delivered in Parliament, but I do say that it seems to me that so far as the censorship is concerned, those who have been placed in power have been too free altogether with the blue pencil.

Mr. SMITH: They lack knowledge and judgment?

Mr. MURPHY: I quite agree with the hon. member that they have shown a lack of judgment, but, after all, supposing that this

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motion is carried—and it will be carried—what is going to be effected? It is only another of the many protests already delivered against the system of censorship. It is not going to have the effect of altering the position, and the exception I take to it is that it was never brought before Parliament until the Premier came into conflict with the censor. Because the Premier's speech has been mutilated, the time of Parliament is to be spent in discussing the question. We are being told almost every day of the week that is the desire of the Cabinet and hon. members supporting the Cabinet to close the session as speedily as possible. Yet we spend a whole day on a question such as this, on a motion, the carrying of which will have no effect on the censorship. I would certainly like to see the Federal Government relax the censorship. I do not think Australians are frightened of hearing news about the war, and from what I can learn, the censorship is greater in Australia than it is in Great Britain. (Hear, hear!) I have been told that cables which have passed the censor in London have been again censored when they reached Australia. To me that seems to be a ridiculous state of affairs, and so far as this conscription campaign is concerned, I for one would gladly welcome the publication of all the arguments. I say that when a referendum is being taken it is desirable that both sides of the question should be placed fully and fairly before the people. (Hear, hear!) I am not in a position to say whether the statements that have been taken from the Premier's speech were a fair comment upon the situation. Evidently the censor had some reason for taking those statements out of his speech.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: What would it matter if they were not fair so long as they did not damage the Empire?

Mr. MAY: Who is the censor?

Mr. MURPHY: I have not the slightest acquaintance with the gentleman.

Mr. PETERSON: Do you believe it is a fair thing to allow one man to say something and get it published and for another not?

Mr. MURPHY: No, I believe in fair play all round, but I say that hon. members should have moved long enough ago, that they should not have left this question of the censorship up to the present time, when the Premier has suffered. I have pointed out that quite a number of people have suffered in Australia before.

Mr. PETERSON: Was ever a threat before against supposed malicious statements?

Mr. MURPHY: Under the War Precautions Act, which was supported by the Federal Labour party, the Government has great powers on an occasion such as this, and they make regulations under it just as they believe those regulations are necessary. Those of us who in this Parliament have continually protested against Government by regulation know that every Act of Parliament which has been introduced for years past has been followed by a number of regulations giving the Government all sorts of powers. We have protested against that, and we have protested in some measure against the great amount of power that has been given to the censors under this War Precautions Act.

Mr. SMITH: We can disallow regulations, but that is not the case with these regulations.

Mr. MURPHY: The hon. member knows that we have the right to protest against certain regulations, but a majority in this Chamber takes very good care that the minority never gets any opportunity of dealing with regulations framed by the Government of the day or at the command of the Government of the day. So far as I am concerned, I am not particularly enamoured either of the party motion or the amendment. Looked at purely from the national standpoint, the great power which the censors in Australia have held for the last three years is to be very much regretted, and I for one would welcome an alteration. I believe, so far as those who are engaged in the referendum campaign are concerned, that their speeches might well be published. I don't think that any speech which will be delivered on one side or the other is likely to prove damaging to the Empire, or give the enemy overseas, at any rate, any particulars with regard to the military position in Australia. But, at the same time, I am not one who believes that because the Premier has received a knock through the operations of the censorship, Parliament should rush away to find fault with a thing which has existed for over three years past.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): The hon. member who has just resumed his seat failed to balance the "Yes" and "No" position he took up. He did not justify his position at all. He made reference to the censorship and said that there had been no attempt to deal with this matter before the Premier's speech was censored. No one can accuse me of having any illusions or delusions in connection with this war since this war commenced. I raised my voice, before I entered this House, in Sydney, at the Australian Workers' Union conference, against the censorship and against the War Precautions Act; and I have raised it in this House, especially in regard to the censorship. There is nothing I have objected to so strongly as the censorship in Australia—claiming, as I do, that we should not have been treated as children; that we should have been told the truth and we should be allowed to speak the truth as far as we understand the truth; because sometimes it is very hard to define what is the truth. How am I to judge what is the truth if I am denied the right to know what is going on in connection with this war? To-night there was an attack made upon me by the hon. member for Dalby, in which he said that I delivered a seditious speech in this House. I have a copy of that speech in my pocket at the present moment. I have read it carefully since the hon. member made the attack upon me, and I will ask him to point out in that particular speech the portion of it that is seditious. I claim that he is not a judge of sedition. He is not a judge of the traditions or the history of the race to which I belong. I happened to be born in England, and if I am wrong it is owing to the fact that I have been reared on English literature. Maybe the books given me by my father in another country which I have been able to read in this country, were entirely wrong. I was taught to love liberty. I read Milton when I was very young. I have his prose works by my side to-night—a plea for the freedom of the Press

—which we have not in Australia at the present moment. I say here to-night that if my speech is seditious, the best in literature in my country is also seditious. I could prove, if time would permit me, that the writings of Ruskin were seditious when Ruskin wrote against all war. There are men living in the United Kingdom to-day who say stronger things than have ever been said in this House or outside it. Anyone would know that who has followed the Leeds conference in Great Britain, when they declared that the Russian revolution was one of the finest things that had ever happened, and inferred by their remarks that it would be a good thing if other countries would follow in their footsteps; yet those men were not classed as traitors. But if we get up to speak in opposition to the powers that be, we are immediately classed as traitors and called pro-Germans and everything that is bad. Now I say that the hon. member for Dalby said I sheltered myself behind my parliamentary privilege. I was in the Bowen electorate during the Federal election and I practically said all that is contained in my speech which the hon. member said is seditious. I am not in the habit of saying one thing in Parliament and another thing outside Parliament. I say that that hon. member is not a judge of sedition or of what sedition really means. If to be true to your country is seditious then I was guilty of sedition; especially this Australia of ours, which is more to me than any other country on earth. I have lived here the biggest portion of my life; I have been in it since I was fifteen years of age; and so long as I have a voice and am able to protest against tyranny in any shape or form I will do so; because the interference with the Press is one of the greatest forms of tyranny that could be practised in any country in the civilised world; because a country can only progress in proportion to the intelligence of its people. How are the people to become intelligent if the Press is to be suppressed—which is taking place at the present time. Surely we have not lost the spirit of our forefathers in this State or this Commonwealth? We should not tolerate—and we would be cravens and nothing less than worms if we did so—any interference with our rights as a sovereign State. I was surprised to hear the leader of the Opposition say what he did. I thought I was listening to Hindenburg. The representative of Prussianism is on the Opposition benches to-night, when he tells us there is no such thing as liberty of speech and there was nothing in any Constitution in the whole world outside Belgium. Does not the hon. member know that custom in all countries is greater than law? Why, custom existed before law. To say that we do not possess the right of free speech is to say something which is entirely wrong.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: You try it outside.

Mr. COLLINS: I have tried it outside. I have defied that little man by the name of William Morris Hughes on more than one occasion. Who is he? As I said in this House on another occasion, I have no time for Kaiser "Bill" in Germany; I have no time for Czar Nicholas in Russia or for this little "Kaiser Bill" in Australia. We are not going to come under Prussianism. The hon. member for Burke threw off at members on this side about our patriotism.

Mr. MURPHY: I didn't throw off at you.

Mr. Collins.]

Mr. COLLINS: You did. You said we cared very little about the Empire. What has the hon. member done for the Empire, that he should throw off at members on this side who have lost their loved and dear ones in this fight in the defence of the Empire?

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. COLLINS: I am sick of it all, myself; I am sick of being continually told that I am a traitor to my country. I am tired of it; and I say it is scandalous to think we have men in Australia occupying high positions, who will stoop so low, who will go down in the very gutter, as it were, for a mere temporary gain. Call them statesmen? There is no statesman in Australia at the present time. All there is, is a number of men who would suppress freedom, if they could; who are acting on behalf of a higher power; who have no initiative of their own; who are doing practically as they are told. Now, I am opposed, in every shape and form, to the censorship. Let the truth be told. Who is afraid of the truth? How are we going to fight in this conscription, if we who are opposed to compulsion are denied the right of publishing what we consider to be the truth. Fancy the Prime Minister of Australia being allowed to be the judge of what is the truth! No one can accuse me of ever being fond of him. Even when he was in the Labour ranks I had no time for him. I watched the whole of his career, and maybe I am just as well able to sum up the little chap who is running the Australian Commonwealth at the present time, as any man in the Commonwealth. I know the type of man we have to deal with—which some men don't seem to realise. I say that liberty is all-important to the people of Queensland and of the Commonwealth in this great crisis. As the hon. member for Murrumbidgee has mentioned about German militarism, I want to give a quotation from a book published in Great Britain, written by an Englishman. It is put in better language than I have command of—but that is no fault of mine. He uses stronger arguments than ever I have used. I have been inspired by that man to some extent. I have been a follower of his for the best part of thirty years, and I am not ashamed to say it in this House. Edward Carpenter says—

"That in the future there will be an outcry in favour of conscription made by certain parties in Britain goes without saying; but that must be persistently opposed. The nation says it is fighting to put down militarism. Why, then, make compulsory militarism foundational in our national life? To abolish militarism by militarism is like 'putting down drink' by swallowing it! The whole lesson of this war is against conscription. Germany could never have 'imposed herself' on Europe without it. And yet her soldiers, brave as they naturally are, and skilfully as they have fought, have not done themselves justice. How could they under such conditions—forced into battle by their officers, flung in heaps on the enemy's guns? The voluntary response in Britain to the call to arms has been inspiring; and if voluntarism means momentary delay in

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a crisis, still it means success in the end. No troops have fought more finely than the British."

Of course, we are told that Great Britain has conscription; but we want to realise there were about 5,000,000 went under the voluntary system before they passed their Conscription Act at all. At any rate, all my relatives went under the voluntary system; and I am sorry to say there is not one left at present who has not been killed, wounded, or taken prisoner. Yet the man who controls the Commonwealth to-day, I suppose, will refer to me as a "traitor." My people in another country are putting up the same fight against oppression as I am putting up here. We stand for all that is best in the British race; the same as your Bunyans, your Miltons, your Goodwyns, and many other great men who have made England what she is to-day. I have at my side another work called "Political Justice," written over 100 years ago by William Goodwin. It would be a good thing if more men were acquainted with it. They would realise that even at that period of time this man had very advanced ideas. Yet he was not called a traitor, or a pro-German, or something else, simply because he had advanced ideas. There have always been men in Great Britain, and I hope there always will be, who have not been afraid to speak what they consider to be the truth. The newspapers in Great Britain are not censored like our newspapers are to-day.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. COLLINS: I, from time to time, have an opportunity of seeing a Labour paper published in Great Britain; and there are stronger articles in that paper in connection with the war than ever have appeared in any Australian paper I have been able to get hold of. And yet they have not been censored. Why, it is a sign of weakness.

That is what it really amounts [9.30 p.m.] to. It is childlike in my opinion in a great crisis to be afraid. This censorship is a reflection upon the Government. No Government consisting of strong, able men; men of upright character, men who are fearless, would be afraid of the truth being told to the people of Australia. In this campaign we are not able to tell the people the truth. The hon. gentleman, I suppose, will say you can go out on the platform, but everyone knows that is impossible. Take the electorate I represent. It is impossible, between now and referendum day, for me to reach the whole of those 7,000 electors, that, travelling night and day. I could not reach every little corner in my electorate and there are bigger electorates than mine. The only way we can reach them is by literature, and we had some of the literature we propose to issue read out by the Treasurer to-night and some of the Opposition said, it was a good thing that it was suppressed. They ought to be ashamed to call themselves Britishers. What does this censorship really mean to the Commonwealth? It means nothing more nor less than Prussianism. Did not many of our native-born leave these shores to go to Europe to help to destroy Prussianism, and yet we find we are having adopted in the Commonwealth to-day Prussian methods. That which we set out to destroy we are now building up in our own Commonwealth. What is the use of conquering the enemy if,

in the process, we are going to conquer ourselves? The first thing we have to do is to prove to the world that we are a free people; to prove to the world that there is one nation that believes in liberty, one nation that believes in a free Press. Now I want to give another quotation from the same work by Edward Carpenter. He has taken the platform in various parts of the United Kingdom against conscription, and I have never heard as yet that the British Government has attempted to interfere with him. They have too much intelligence to attempt to interfere with a man of this stamp, and yet he sent his words broadcast. Here you allow this work to circulate in the Commonwealth. It is in our own library. This is a copy of my own by the way. This is what he said—what he said is quite true in regard to Australia—"The voluntary system is not a failure. It has been a huge success. What is astonishing me is that you got so many men to enlist, not that you got so few. What is the use of making a comparison with the year 1914-15? You may have got 100,000 men in 1914-15 and in 1915-16 you might only get 50,000 men. You cannot grow a crop of men like you can grow a crop of radishes or carrots. Some members of the Opposition seem to think you can. It takes time and we have done marvellously well in this Commonwealth in sending the number of men we have sent. This is what Edward Carpenter says—

"If the nation wants soldiers it must pay for them. England, for example, is rolling in wealth; and it is simply a scandal that the wealthy classes should sit at home in comfort and security and pay to the man in the trenches—who is risking his life at every moment, and often living in such exhaustion and misery as actually to wish for the bullet which will end his life—no more than the minimum wage of an ordinary day-labourer; and that they should begrudge every penny paid to his dependents—whether he be living or dead—or to himself when he returns, a lifelong cripple, to his home. To starve and stint your own soldiers, to discourage recruiting, and then to make the consequent failure of men to come forward into an excuse for conscription is the meanest of policies."

That is what is happening in Australia. It is contemptible, it is mean that you should propose conscription in Australia. If you want to get men, why not increase their pay? We are told by the Commonwealth Statistician that we are the wealthiest State in the Commonwealth per head of population. What would be wrong in saying to our men, instead of receiving 6s. per day you shall receive 12s. per day. Make those people who have got the wealth and who are talking about conscription; make them pay up. Make them pay for the war. Make them pay for the men who are going to fight for us. They do not want that. What they really want is to empty this great Australia of ours so that they can bring in cheap labour, no matter of what colour. The hon. member for Mirani knows just as well as I do that if you exhaust the white labour of Queensland and next year there is a heavy cane crop that there will be no one to harvest it. Who is going to harvest the cane crop? Some of those big-bellied capitalists that I see round about Brisbane? Are they

going up to cut cane? Will the leader of the Opposition get hold of a cane knife and cut his share?

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: No.

Mr. COLLINS: Not a bit of it. And then they will tell you that the women are working in the fields of France and England. In one of the books in our library it is pointed out that there are too many old men and women in the munition factories in England, and that there are too many in France. We were told only the other day by a leading light in Great Britain that it was not a question of single men. He told us that they might have to bring some of the skilled mechanics who were single men back from the front to build your aeroplanes and to work in your munition factories. Yet we have a party in Australia that care nothing at all about Australia. I have no hesitation in saying that I have always stood for Australia and always will stand for Australia. It is more to me than any other country on the earth. My bones, I suppose, will rest here later on. All I have got is here. All I hold sacred is here in Australia, and it is for us to do our duty by Australia, and that duty cannot be done by emptying Australia of all its manhood. We were told by the hon. member for Murrumbidgee that we have 1,250,000 tons of wheat in Australia, and that there were no ships to take it away. Then, why all this cry about conscription? If there are no ships to take away the wheat, where are the ships coming from to take away the wheat? Senator Pearce, a few days ago, told us that there were no ships to carry the troops away. What is the object of this conscription proposal? After all, we want to realise that we, as a part of the British Empire, have been fairly liberal towards the Empire. I am going to read an extract which appears in the Sydney "Bulletin" of 8th November, 1917. However it got there is a mystery to me. Is there one form of censorship in Queensland and another in New South Wales, another form in Victoria, another in South Australia, another in Western Australia, and another in Tasmania? It appears to me that Queensland has been picked out by the Commonwealth authorities for special attention in the matter of censorship. Perhaps it is because we have a Labour Government in this State. Long may it remain so.

At twenty-five minutes to 10 o'clock,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. COLLINS: This is what the Sydney "Bulletin" of 8th November, 1917 says—

"War is a queer business; but the queerest aspect of it that came under Holman's notice is the payment of rent for the ground where Billjim has his little dug-out:—

"The Belgian and French farmers and landowners, instead of going to their own Governments and making claims which would be settled with the British Government, personally come to the British adjutants or other officers on the ground and begin to haggle about the trench rents and rent for other occupied territory. So Australia pays its share to the British Government. The Belgian and French peasants are sometimes grasping, and show themselves in their worst light.

"Holman found a few things that made him wonder whether the organ-

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ising genius he had heard about wasn't a myth; but he reckons this method of settling the rent payable for a battlefield is well able to hold its own for foolishness."

Why wasn't that censored? Evidently we had to pay rent for defending other people's territory. That is what it really amounts to. I do not know why that was not censored. I suppose the censor came to the conclusion that if it got to the enemy it would not hurt at all. That is more likely to hurt recruiting than anything I know of; to think that you have to pay rent for defending another man's country. I never thought that people were so avaricious and so grasping. I do not intend to labour this question as I have spoken so often on it in this House. I am not ashamed of any utterances of mine, notwithstanding what the hon. member for Dalby says, because I know within myself that I will come out on top in regard to my utterances. I have been proved to have been fairly correct ever since this war commenced. As I said before, I have no illusions, or delusions, about the British Government. I know them well, because I have not read the history of kings and queens. I have not wasted my time over that. Life is too short to waste time in reading the history of kings and queens. What I have been concerned about is the history of the common people; and, knowing the history of the common people, I am well able to gauge the people who are governing Great Britain. And, knowing the history of the common people of this Commonwealth, and also knowing the history of the common people in most countries of the world, I am also able to gauge the present Commonwealth Government. I understand the capitalistic system from A to Z, and I understand the people who are controlling the various governments of the world. I know full well that liberty was never taken from any people in ancient times, or in modern times, by one stroke of the pen. It has always been done in an insidious manner; little by little. We will wake up one morning, if we do not look out, and find that all our liberties in this Commonwealth have gone. All gone. I was one of the first to protest when the War Precautions Act was placed on the statute-book. I said at the time it was slavishly following Great Britain. I believe in initiative. I do not believe in slavishly following any country. Great Britain passed a War Precautions Act and a Defence of the Realms Act, but it did not follow that we should have passed similar Acts. But, owing to the fact that we had weak-kneed politicians in power at the time—it might have been a Labour Government—that Act was placed on the statute-book. There is no necessity for the War Precautions Act. We are too far away from the seat of war. There was nothing that we did that the Germans were likely to get hold of, and even if they did get hold of it it would not have assisted them much in winning the war. We have not been told the truth about the war. We have not been told the truth even at the present time. No one knows that better than Mr. Hughes, but Mr. Hughes should remember that no one can govern this country unless the people of the country are willing that they should govern it. Every statesman should learn that, and learn it well, and he should learn also that interference with the liberty of the people is not the right way to bring about good

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government in any country. We have little enough rights at the present moment. Of course I know that some of our people in Australia have been told that often that they are the freest people on God's earth, that they really believe it. Some of them even believe it to-day.

Mr. BAXLEY: So they are.

Mr. COLLINS: No. They are not so free, so far as the press is concerned, as they are in Great Britain. And I am astonished that the Liberal press—papers like the "Courier" and the "Daily Mail," the "Sydney Morning Herald," "Daily Telegraph," the "Sun," the Melbourne "Age" and the "Argus"—had not entered a more vigorous protest against this censorship. It appears to me they are willing to be dragged at the heels of the Federal Government. (Hear, hear.) No matter what that Government does they say it is all right. Unfortunately we have no independent press in Australia—outside the labour press. In Great Britain the "Manchester Guardian" never hesitates to criticise the great British Government. And is there any talk about the people who control the "Manchester Guardian" being disloyal? Nothing of the kind. It is only small-minded individuals who think there is no argument but their own, who say "you are disloyal, you are a pro-German; how dare you differ from me." They are something like the school master who will not allow the pupil to contradict him. They are something like the parson in the pulpit who will not allow you to get up in the middle of his sermon and contradict him, or he will have you arrested. They say, "How dare you contradict me?" That is practically what "Billy" Hughes is doing at the present time. "I am right; what do you know about it?" I often hear the hon. member for Murrumbidgee say, "What do you know about it?", assuming that autocratic style that has brought about the downfall of Nicholas in Russia. William Morris Hughes wants to realise that among the 5,000,000 people in Australia there are far brainier people than he; and, that given the opportunity, they would have made a much better job of winning the war than he has. He is nothing but a great mass of bluff, is that little chap, but he is not going to bluff me. He managed to bluff the Labour party for a long time, and he is now bluffing the Tory party, who practically go down on their knees to him.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: They have him ready for the sacrifice.

Mr. COLLINS: Of course they will sacrifice him the same as Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac only for the appearance of the angel. (Laughter.) Maybe on the 20th December we will sacrifice him by a majority of the people in this Commonwealth voting "No." That will be a complete sacrifice, because if he is a man at all he will resign then, because he has talked so much about winning the war. I am sick and tired of hearing them talk about winning the war, when they do not raise their fingers to win the war. The war can only be won by the men who fight, and not by the men who talk about it. There should have been no need for this conscription issue at all. Over a million of the friends of hon. gentlemen opposite voted for conscription. Why have they not volunteered? Why all this

cant and hypocrisy? Why tell a man to do something you are not willing to do yourselves? I have never been prepared to ask man to do something I am not prepared to do myself.

Mr. BAYLEY interjected.

Mr. COLLINS: The hon. member for Pittsworth had better go to the front if he thinks it a right thing to send others there.

Mr. BAYLEY: I would not be taken.

Mr. COLLINS: Well, I did not know that. At any rate, that is a good excuse: "I would not be taken." I meet all knids of men in my travels, men who say "I am too old; I am fifty." A friend of mine and other hon. members only recently came back from the front, and he was aged 62." That was William Bishop, of Mount Morgan. He did not say he was too old when he believed it was a right thing for him to go. There were over 1,000,000 voters in Australia who believed in conscription. Why did they not volunteer? I have no time for such canting hypocrites. They could not all claim that they were too-old men or too-old women. Why, the men might be classed as old women. We should never have had this question before us if they really believed that when they went to the ballot box and voted in favour of conscription. It seems to me they go to the ballot box to send others and raise prices at home for the widows and orphans that are left behind. Coming back to the amendment, I am opposed to it. It is simply a red herring drawn across the trail. They cannot hurt me if they call me disloyalist. They have called me that so often that I am used to it. When I was a boy we used to say "Sticks and stones will break my bones, but names will never hurt me." Calling a man a disloyalist will not hurt him in the least. Then they say, "You might go out of Parliament." Even suppose I do, how much better is it to go out of Parliament in the right than to remain in Parliament in the wrong?

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): I think if we had a stranger here to-night from the other side of the world he would say, "You live in a fools' paradise in Australia." Hon. gentlemen opposite get up and prate about their freedom and liberty and all the rest of it, but do they not know that at the present moment every vestige of their liberty is trembling in the balance on the other side of the world. Is the position to-day any better than it was at the beginning? Is it any better than when we had that big poster stuck up, signed by T. J. Ryan, "The Empire is in danger, and every man is wanted"? Is the position any better now than it was then? Is not every man wanted now? What roars there were when "Andy" Fisher said, "The last shilling and the last man." Has the last man gone yet? No.

Mr. PETERSON: What about the last shilling?

Mr. SWAYNE: Making all allowances for those who are required at home, for those who are not eligible, we have 150,000 fit young men in Australia. Does that bear out "Andy" Fisher's "Last man"? What nonsense it is; and then they talk about what may happen to unionism if we have conscription. What good will their sectional unionism be against a German machine gun?

What good will it do then? The fact of the matter is that they are well content to lean on their conscript allies. Where would they be now without conscript France, and without conscript Britain? What great comfort they are taking to their souls that America has come into it, and America has gone in for conscription, and America will save them. That is the balm they are taking to their hearts—others will do what they ought to. However, what I want more particularly to address myself to now is the question of the censorship. The hon. member for Burke, in his speech, said he did not think any member of this House would say anything that would convey dangerous information to the enemy. Perhaps not, but there are other ways of assisting the enemy, and there is such a way as this: saying things that will prevent Australia from doing its best, and that is the censorship that these gentlemen fear. Things have been said constantly, at every meeting they hold, that are not only injurious to conscription, but they are also injurious to voluntary enlistment.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Quote on.

Mr. SWAYNE: I will. We heard Mr. Ryan prating about the manner in which his speech had certain parts deleted. I have here Mr. Tudor's speech recently delivered in Melbourne, and Senator Pearce's reply to him, and he shows clearly where statements are being made that are not true, and statements that would lead to the discouraging of men not only from voting for conscription but from enlisting. I have here Mr. Tudor's opening speech, according to the telegraphic report from Melbourne appearing on the 14th November. He said—

"I would like now to touch upon the achievements of Australia since the war began. Up to 3rd November the total enlistments have been 383,929, which is a wonderful achievement for less than 5,000,000 people, situated 12,000 miles from the zone of the war. The following percentage of the divisions engaged on the western front has been given:—British, 82 per cent; Australians, 9 per cent; Canadians, 7 per cent; New Zealanders, 2 per cent. You will see that Australia, with her 5,000,000 people, is holding 9 per cent. of the front; whilst Canada, with her 3,400,000 people, is holding only 7 per cent. It must not be forgotten also that Australia has a large number of troops in Egypt. Australia has, indeed, done well under the voluntary system, and if the exemptions promised are granted it will not be long before we will be unable to supply reinforcements at all."

Now, that would be all right if it were true, but it is distinctly contradicted by the Minister for Defence, and I take leave to say that the Minister for Defence is a better authority on this subject than Mr. Tudor.

Several GOVERNMENT MEMBERS interjecting.

Mr. SWAYNE: Hon. members opposite talk about the freedom of speech, and yet the moment anything is said that disagrees with them, they try to prevent the speaker from being heard. Mr. Tudor goes on—

"The Prime Minister, in his speech last night, stated that there were 370,000 single men, widowers, and divorcees

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available, but from the figures furnished to Senator Gardiner during the last campaign by the Defence Department there were 190,869 single fit men reported, 179,519 examined, 110,863 fit, 49,851 unfit, 10,842 doubtful, and 8,323 temporarily unfit."

Senator Pearce criticised those figures as false, and he shows that those figures are not right.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He shows nothing of the sort.

Mr. SWAYNE: I shall quote from a telegram dated 14th November—

"Senator Pearce, Minister for Defence, referring to-day to Mr. Tudor's speech at Richmond last night, said that Mr. Tudor's excursions into figures had been most unhappy. If, when Mr. Tudor referred to the percentage of divisions engaged on the west front, said Senator Pearce, to be fair, he should have stated that this percentage referred to a particular engagement, whereas he drew the deduction that Australia had 2 per cent. more troops there than Canada, which was not correct."

Actually, Mr. Tudor tried to work up his case on a single engagement.

The PREMIER: He quoted Senator Pearce's own figures.

Mr. SWAYNE: Senator Pearce said they were wrong. (Laughter.) The [10 p.m.] hon. member has not got up and shown that that is the case. My information is not to that effect. He goes on to say—

"to be fair, he should have stated that this percentage referred to a particular engagement, whereas he drew the deduction that Australia had two per cent. more troops there than Canada, which is not correct.

"THE TOTAL ENLISTMENTS.

"Again, he quotes me as saying that the enlistments totalled 380,000, and that there were in camp 16,000, as if the 16,000 should be added to the 380,000, whereas the 16,000 form part of the 380,000. It also has to be borne in mind that more than 60,000 of the 380,000 have for various reasons never become effective, and have never left Australia. Of course, Mr. Tudor forgot to mention this.

"THE SINGLE MEN AVAILABLE.

"But the most extraordinary statement of all is where Mr. Tudor quotes the figures that had been previously supplied to Senator Gardiner as to the number of single men who were called into camp under the proclamation in October, 1916, as throwing a doubt upon the statement of the Prime Minister at Bendigo on Monday last that there were 370,000 single men available in Australia. Under the proclamation 190,869 single men reported, as quoted by Mr. Tudor, but he omitted to say that that proclamation only called up men who were over 21 and under 35 years of age, whereas the present proposals are to call up men of from over 20 to 44 years of age, which gives nine yearly quotas more than were called up under the 1916 proclamation."

My point is this: In dealing with this matter

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and submitting it to the people of Australia, the truth is the first essential and it would be most wrong to allow statements to be circulated to mislead the people in their vote.

The PREMIER: The truth has been censored out on this occasion.

Mr. SWAYNE: Of course, that is what the hon. member says. We have only got his statement for that.

The PREMIER: It is true that there is no conscription in South Africa?

Mr. SWAYNE: The hon. member turns to South Africa now. I am dealing with Australia, and, anyway, it has been pointed out time and again to-night that South Africa does not form a comparison with Australia. However, I am claiming that it is not only desirable to prevent information leaving Australia that might be helpful to the enemy, but it is also desirable that untruths should be stopped here in Australia.

The PREMIER: It is not the untruth they are stopping, but the truth.

Mr. SWAYNE: I have here some of the dodgers issued during the last conscription campaign, and I say the shameful prevocations, misrepresentations that took place during that campaign more than justify a very strict guard being kept on the utterances of speakers this time. This pamphlet is signed by J. A. Fihelly, J. MacDonald, J. S. Collings, J. Hanlon, T. H. Sewell, E. H. Lane, and Cuthbert Butler. Are they on this side of the House?

Mr. McPHAIL: Those regulations affect only one side.

Mr. SWAYNE: Because only the truth comes from this side. Here is one of those half truths, which is worse than an untruth. They quote Mr. Lloyd George as saying—

"We do not want recruits for the army."

Of course, what has happened is that they have just taken one small part from a speech and quoted it without the context as a reason why the people should not vote for conscription. And, mark you, the same thing will keep people from enlisting. If people are told that such authorities as Lloyd George say that men are not wanted as recruits for the army, the reason for enlisting or conscription vanishes, and I say that in the interests of the Empire and Australia it is most necessary that the truth, at any rate, should be stated.

The PREMIER: That is all I want.

Mr. SWAYNE: And so far as I am able to judge, that is all the censor has tried to do. Then, again, take that constant statement—which has been made here again to-night—that conscription or reinforcements or whatever you like to call it, is not required for the fighting front, but has to do with industrial matters, that this measure is only wanted to tie the working man down, to limit his freedom of action in Australia, and so on. That is another bogey which is being constantly raised, and it is a misrepresentation, because neither proposal—neither the one last year nor the present proposal—affects the position in Australia one iota. We have had for some years on our Australian statute-book the Australian Defence Act, passed by a Labour Government, and under that Act

all the powers that we should have under this proposal exist to-day so far as service in Australia is concerned. The only additional power that is sought is to send men out of Australia, not to compel them to work within Australia. We have heard what took place in France when during the big strike of railway men, the men were called to the colours and compelled to work, and we are told that that is the idea here, and that when a strike occurs advantage will be taken of the law to bring about a similar sort of thing here. Whether that is so or not, the fact remains that the present proposal would bring about no alteration except so far as sending men across the sea is concerned, and that is one of the strongest arguments you hear about conscription. I do say that there is some obligation on public speakers to adhere to facts, and if they will not adhere to facts then their untruths, such as the above, should be prevented from going further. I think that is a perfectly fair statement to make.

Now, while we are on this subject, it is just as well to point out how our actions are viewed on the other side of the world. When the last vote was taken and the question was turned down, hon. members on the other side were very jubilant; and I would like to point out that there are others who shared their joy. If it is any satisfaction to them to know that the Kaiser shared their joy, then they are welcome to their satisfaction.

Mr. MAY: Rot!

Mr. SWAYNE: It is not rot. It is true. I have here a cablegram from London of what a German paper said—

"The 'Kölnische Zeitung,' a daily paper published in Cologne, deliriously alludes to the final figures of the conscription referendum in Australia, and declares that the rejection of conscription represents the beginning of the end of the British Empire. It means that a majority of Australians refuse any longer to support the motherland. The newspaper also accuses the Australians of rank cowardice. It says that all who were out of gunshot voted for conscription, and that all who would be affected if it were passed voted against it."

Now, we know that that is wrong in its details, but at the same time I wish to point out that nothing pleased Germany so much as the rejection of such a proposal as this; and are we again going to do what they want? It is a time when all the man-power of the Empire is required, and it is all nonsense to say that 150,000 men would be no use. What did the 150,000 of the British standing army do at the beginning of the war. We all know how they stemmed the first wave of German invasion and the material part they took in the saving of Paris. If we had had another 150,000 men at Gallipoli the war might have been over now. If everyone adopted that view, and said, "Oh, it does not matter whether we help or whether we do not, where would we be now?" I think that a narrower and more foolishly selfish view than that could not be conceived. We are just now at a crisis in affairs when it is up to every portion of the Empire, when it is up to every country allied with Great Britain, to do its utmost. And here we are squabbling amongst ourselves. Endeavours are being made to engineer party capital out of every occur-

rence. The Queensland Parliament has been engaged all day in an endeavour to permit some of its members to get made public, under cover of Parliamentary privilege through "Hansard," what the Commonwealth censor and the defence authorities say would be injurious to the successful prosecution of the war were it to be published. When our public men go too far, when they are carried away on the platform, it is a good thing when there is something to save us from the consequences anyhow at such a time as this. I say that any interference with public speech or the freedom of the newspapers is of very serious import, but what some hon. members seem to forget is that we are at war. Judging them by their actions and their utterances, one would think that no such thing existed, but we must realise that at such a time as this we have to submit to restrictions that at other times we would not tolerate. I would like to point out that with such a wide franchise as Australia has, where every man and woman has a vote in the choice of its lawmakers, there is no danger of a permanent interference with our liberties.

The PREMIER: You are blindfolding the people by this censorship. You don't want them to read what we are saying.

Mr. SWAYNE: It is simply to prevent the untruths and misrepresentations that are circulated, which, in turn, would prevent men going to the front. It is simply to prevent a course of action that would defeat what was in the Premier's own mind when he issued that proclamation at the beginning of the war—that every man was wanted. The sort of thing that is being constantly tried on by hon. members opposite must prevent enlistment—when they are telling them that they are not wanted; that they could do no good if they were there, and all that sort of thing. Now, as regards the shipping position that has been brought up. We can take it as assured that if we have the men they will find the ships. It is not likely that the Commonwealth would go to the expense of equipping a large body of men if they did not see their way clear to get them to the front. I think we can safely leave that matter in the hands of the Commonwealth Parliament.

The PREMIER: Would not you allow others to have a different opinion from you on that?

Mr. SWAYNE: I am content to leave the matter in the hands of those who are charged to look after it. You must remember that the Commonwealth Government just now represents a very big majority of the people of Australia.

The PREMIER: Not on this question. Not at all.

Mr. SWAYNE: Further, you must remember that it is a particular charge on the Commonwealth Government to manage war matters. I think it behoves our Premier to confine his attention to his own scope.

The PREMIER: That is exactly what I am doing.

Mr. SWAYNE: Queensland is a sovereign State in its own domain; but its own domain does not include defence.

The PREMIER: I am not going to gag or blindfold anybody.

Mr. SWAYNE: Its own domain does not include military matters. The people of

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Australia have elected the Commonwealth Government to deal with military matters, and I think we can be well content to leave those matters in the hands of that Government.

Mr. GILLIES (*Eacham*): I am quite sure that anyone who knows the member for Mirani, who has just resumed his seat, is not surprised to find him such an ardent advocate of the conscription of human life; and I think his advocacy, and that of men like him, gives colour to the current belief that the origin of this question of conscription is not to be found in a desire to assist the Empire to win the war, but with a desire to bring in cheap labour. Men who know the hon. member better than I do have told me—and I have no reason to doubt it—that not only was he a believer in cheap black labour, but he was an employer of kanaka labour in the early days.

Mr. SWAYNE: I was one of the first advocates of white labour.

Mr. GILLIES: When the people of Australia declared for and put in the first plank of their platform a white Australia, there was no one who howled so much as the hon. gentleman about the departure of the kanaka; and he was not satisfied even when the kanaka was gone, but he did all in his power to keep down the wages of white workers in this State. That being so, I am sure no one is surprised to find the hon. member burning with a desire to conscript his fellow-countrymen and send them away in order that he may be given the opportunity he so much desires. Now, I submit that a crisis has arrived in the history of this country when every public man should have the courage to define his position. It is necessary that the men who believe there should be conscription to state their case and declare for conscription. We on this side of the House to a man believe that conscription of human life is not necessary and will not have the effect of winning the war. We believe that the difference between conscription and the voluntary system in Australia is not the difference between winning and losing the war. Now, the motion and amendment before the House this evening are of great importance, because I think we have all recognised the importance of the freedom of the Press and freedom of speech. It has been said that the Press is the watchdog of the people. The question naturally arises: If we are not going to hear the whole truth with regard to the question of conscription and anti-conscription—why is the question submitted to the people at all? Why ask the people to give an opinion on this important question if you are not prepared to trust them? A great change has come over Mr. Hughes. When he submitted his referendum for greater Federal powers he was the one who advocated and brought into existence a system of putting the case for and against in the hands of every elector in the Commonwealth. No question could be of greater importance to the people than the question we have to decide on 20th December. Mr. Hughes, in his attempt to fool, to gull, and to hoodwink the people, is not prepared to give the people who are opposed to him an opportunity of placing their views before the electors before they record their vote. Now, with regard to the Press, the great Sheridan one time remarked—and I quite

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agree with him—in a speech he made in the House of Commons: "Let them have a corrupt House of Lords; let them have a tyrannical Prince; a truckling court. Give me an unfettered Press, and I will defy them to encroach one hair's-breadth on the rights of the people of England." While we have an unfettered Press there is no danger but what the people will hear the truth. It behoves every man who believes in freedom of speech and action to protest against this military tyranny so far as the Press is concerned. I desired to hear what the Premier said the other night. I was not permitted to go there and hear for myself, and I had the desire to read it in the Press on the following day, because it should be the desire of every man and woman to know the truth. I have the confidence in my fellow-countrymen that if they come to a wrong conclusion with regard to any great public question it is not because of a desire to do the wrong thing, but because that conclusion is based on false premises. Therefore I say that the whole truth and nothing but the truth should be placed before the people to enable them to arrive at a decision with regard to this important question. We are told there are two men in the "Standard" office looking after everything that goes through the "Standard" newspaper. I wonder are there two men put in the office of any of the other newspapers of this city.

Mr. MORGAN: They have not offended.

Mr. GILLIES: No. It was all right for the "Courier" to issue a German edition to their German clients—published in German, with German sentiments—for 12 months after this war broke out. There was no censor then. That was all right. But when papers express opinions differing from those held by William Morris Hughes, the censor is put into the office to review every word and every sentence before it is printed in the paper. Now I say: "Let there be light. Let truth stand, though the Heavens fall." Burns, the immortal Scottish poet, once said—

"Here's freedom to them who would read,
Here's freedom to them who would write,
There's none ever feared that the Truth
should be heard
Save them that the truth would indict."

That seems to be the position of conscriptionists all over Australia. They are afraid the truth will be heard; they are afraid that the electors will know the truth before they are called upon to record their vote on 20th December. I say too much publicity cannot be given to both sides. The average elector is in a fog. He desires to do the right thing. He is called upon on 20th December to perform one of the gravest and far-reaching duties he has ever been called upon to perform. I say too much information cannot be supplied to the people of Australia, in order to enable them to arrive at a right and fair conclusion on this great question. On the last occasion when the question was put before the people it was defeated by 73,000 votes. The question was submitted in a different way on that occasion. I have had the opportunity of discussing the question with a number of returned soldiers—friends of mine from my own electorate and relatives who have returned. The general opinion expressed by them is that in the first place the soldiers did not get a fair deal with

regard to recording their vote in the trenches; and the majority of those who got the opportunity voted against conscription. Three papers in England published the figures—the “Manchester Guardian,” the “Glasgow Herald,” and the “Dublin Freeman,” and they declared that 104,000 voted “No” and 60,000 “Yes”; so that the people of Australia, in my opinion, did the right thing and did what the soldiers in the trenches desired them to do. It appears to me that every effort is being made to gull the people over forty-five and the married men into the belief that they are not going to be conscripted. I don’t know why the single men under twenty-one years of age should be conscripted, seeing they are given no opportunity of voting on it. That seems to me to be a very cowardly thing. Now, according to the figures supplied by Mr. Donald Mackinnon, addressing a meeting in Market Square, Brisbane, on 31st October, it would appear that the total single eligibles in Australia amounted to 140,000. The following exemptions have to be taken off, leaving a balance of 52,000:—

“Miners and others in mining industry	8,000
Shearers and skilled pastoral workers	14,000
Navvies and general labourers whose places cannot be filled by women or eligibles	15,000
Butchers (these men cannot be spared as they are supplying our troops with meat)	5,000
Skilled workers in other industries	7,000
Total eligibles left after these exemptions	52,000
52,000 at 7,000 per month=7 months’ supply.”	

Now, we have been assured that the war cannot possibly be brought to an end in that time. So it goes without saying, that this is only “the thin end of the wedge.” Those married men who are going to go to the ballot-box and vote for conscription should bear in mind that it is their turn next. (Hear, hear.) I cannot imagine any man, or any woman, recording a vote to send some person away to their doom, when they are not prepared, or not capable, of going themselves. (Hear, hear.) I think the following words of the great Edmund Burke, uttered in 1789, apply to such individuals:—

“I cannot conceive of anything under heaven more truly odious and disgusting than the helpless, impudent creature who has neither civic wisdom nor military qualifications, loaded with pride and arrogance, howling for battle in which he feels sure he will not be called upon to fight.”

That appears to apply to the individual who—believing himself to be safe—would force some other man to go to his doom. I have every admiration for the man who says “Come with me,” if he believes his Empire is in danger. But the man or

[10.30 p.m.] woman who says, “I am quite safe myself, but I will force you to go to the front,” has that soldier’s life on their heads if he never returns. Since the conscription campaign of 1916 the Liberals, or Nationalists, have done all in their power to kill the voluntary

system. Every opportunity has been taken to insult men who otherwise might have volunteered, by calling them shirkers, cold-footers, and wasters, in order to justify another referendum on conscription. What did Donald McKinnon tell them when he was here a few weeks ago? He practically told them that they were doing everything in their power to kill voluntarism. Did Mr. Hughes ever get up on the public platform and advocate the voluntary system? Not much. But the Premier of Queensland did all in his power, with the assistance of his followers to make the voluntary system a success, and I submit it has been a great success, notwithstanding all the abuse it has received. We, on this side, are called traitors and disloyalists, and all the names that can be hurled against us. We are supposed to have no concern about winning the war and no concern about the Empire, and no dear ones fighting or killed. The men on the other side are supposed to be the loyalists, but I am afraid that some of them “protesteth too much.” It is quite obvious, from the utterance of Sir William Irvine the other night, that this is only the thin end of the wedge if conscription is carried. God forbid that the people of Australia should be so misguided as to carry conscription in this fair country. Two ex-Premiers of the other States have spoken on the question of conscription quite recently. The Hon. Joseph Carruthers is one. He wrote a letter to the “Daily Telegraph,” which was reprinted in last Sunday’s Brisbane “Truth,” and in that letter Mr. Carruthers points out that he is not quite sure whether Australia is doing the right thing in endeavouring to impose conscription. He believes, and I believe, that Australia should be a producing country; that Australia has probably, under the voluntary system, sent all the men she can safely spare; and that we could better assist the Empire by promoting the production of foodstuffs. Sir Alexander Peacock says there is a world shortage of foodstuffs, and we know that the revolutions and riots that have taken place in European countries have been due to the fact that the people have not had sufficient food. It is a well-known fact that in France it is only the soldiers who have got the food they require. There is a shortage of food there, and in Russia the food is so scarce, and at such enormous prices, that a state of revolution has been brought into existence in that country. Napoleon said, and it has been regarded as a military axiom, that an army marches on its belly. It was the bread famine that brought about the French revolution, and while we recognise there is a world’s shortage in foodstuffs Australia has its fertile acres lying idle. I feel sure that we could do a great deal more by developing our agricultural industries than we can by conscripting all our eligible young men and sending them away forcibly to the detriment of this country. We have to remember our policy of Australia is a white Australia. We have to consider the defence of this country, and we have to see that Australia is not depleted of its manhood and thus endanger the white Australian ideal. We must recognise that Australia has done marvellously well under the voluntary system. Over 400,000 men have enlisted, and 360,000 have left our shores already. Any man who says that Australia has not done wonderfully well is not a true Australian. He is a traitor to Australia, because Aus-

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tralia, on the population basis, has done marvellously well in the time. I just want to give a quotation from a Nationalist speaker to substantiate the conclusion I have arrived at with regard to the desire to introduce coloured labour into this country. Mr. Heitmann, M.P., is reported as saying—

“He would send every man out of Australia even if they had to import black, brown, or brindle labour to do the work.”

Already we had complaints about the shortage of labour, and we recognise that, with a record harvest in the sugar districts next year and in other districts, that there will be a great cry of shortage of labour. We have it in the pastoral industry now. There is a general feeling that there will be a shortage of labour, and, if conscription is carried, there will be a determined attempt made to introduce cheap labour into this country. In order to show the effects of conscription in Great Britain, I would like to quote Mr. Boyd Carter on the subject. Writing on the subject, Mr. Boyd Carter says—

“In one factory in Great Britain there are 7,000 girls working on an average eighty-seven hours a week. The manager says they are punctual, keen, tractable, and competent.”

That shows one effect. The hon. member for Mount Morgan quoted extracts to show what are the effects in France and in other countries. I hope the people of Australia and Queensland will have sufficient sense of justice and a sufficient love for their own country to do what they did on the last occasion, and turn down conscription of human life.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): The hon. member who has just sat down, whatever may be said of other hon. members, has certainly confined himself just to the one question of conscription or anti-conscription. I want to give one quotation to show the absolute untruth of the statements made by hon. members on the other side this afternoon, and by the leader of the Commonwealth Labour party, and by the Premier in his opening speech. In a letter published in the “Melbourne Argus” of 16th November, Mr. Heitmann, M.H.R., says—

“MR. HEITMANN, M.H.R.

“TO THE EDITOR OF THE ARGUS.

“Sir,—Mr. Tudor made an absolute misstatement (his authority notwithstanding) when he told his audience at Richmond that at Wedderburn I stated I would send every man out of Australia, even if we had to import coloured labour to do the work. I have often said there was no limitation to the duty of Australians in this war, and as long as there was one able to shoulder a rifle and the beasts of Berlin remained undefeated, it would be to our shame if the rifle were not taken up. At Wedderburn I dealt with the oft-repeated cry of the Official Labour Party that the Nationalists wanted conscription in order to reduce wages, bring in coloured labour, etc. France being quoted as one of the Allies having already introduced native labour from her colonies. I upheld our gallant ally in the following terms:—‘France had borne the brunt of battle, and is bleeding from a million wounds. With

every man, woman, and child engaged in war work of some kind, she found herself unable to keep up supplies for the army and people. The people of France were fervently in love with the policy of reserving their country for the French people for all time, just as we loved the white Australia policy. They also abhorred the idea of bringing in native labour, but in spite of that did so rather than accept the probable alternative of pulling down the flag and saying to Prussia that, because of the policy of white France, they were forced to submit. If ever Australia finds herself in a similar position, fighting with her back to the wall against the Prussians, and unable to keep up supplies, I would use labour, black, brown, or brindle, if the only alternative was to pull down the flag.’ I also referred to the hollow hypocrisy of some of the members of the Official Labour Party who yelled their fears of the white Australia policy being interfered with and in almost the same breath asked why should so many Australians go to the war when there are millions of Indians who should fight for us. If Australia is to be kept white by the efforts of those who refuse to fight for all the principles at stake in the present conflict, then God help her, for her case is hopeless.—Yours, &c.,

“E. E. HEITMANN.

“Box Hill, Nov. 14.”

He showed that if we were right up against it, rather than that this country should be governed by Prussia, and it was absolutely necessary to produce more than we were producing, he would induce those men to do it. I claim that we have not come to that stage yet. I will just read a word or two from a letter by Lord Roberts. We have often heard his opinions quoted, and it might be as well to hear his opinions on national service. Whatever we may say about the censor, it does appear to me that there are some things that have been coming out in the daily papers which I do not think can be said to be truthful, and which certainly should never have been said at this time. Now, I have laid up the statements which have appeared in the “Daily Standard” of a few men who are trying to defeat the matter of recruiting at the present time. (Government dissent.) I find that a gentleman by the name of “Kelly,” speaking the other night at what is called an eligibles’ meeting at the Trades Hall—we have been addressed by the hon. member for Bowen on the matter of rejects, and here are men who term themselves eligibles, that is, men who think there is no reason why they should fight for their country under reasonable conditions—this man apparently endeavours to influence Australian women in regard to the soldiers who have left for the front. And apparently, he follows the method of the Premier, who advises, “Tell it over and over and over again.” He says—

“There are thousands and thousands of Australian soldiers who have married English and Scottish girls.”

We know that is not true. We know that there are not thousands and thousands who have married English wives. Another man said that he had evidence which led him to believe that the last soldiers’ vote was nine

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to one against conscription. In the face of the public statements in the Federal House appearing in "Hansard," why should a man, at a time like this, when we should excite the people to do their best, state that he had information that the voting was nine to one against conscription? These are things on which I would like to know the views of the censor. I am not defending the censor any more, perhaps, than the Premier. I would like to see a fair thing done, but it is remarkable that on an occasion like this our friends opposite cannot restrain themselves, and even men in responsible positions contend that the censor is trying to make it possible to carry a "Yes" vote. I challenge that. I admit that such things as that do help to gull the large body of unthinking people. Every now and again we have heard the Premier interject, "What about South Africa?" I notice a reference to South Africa by another gentleman, Mr. Cook, who points out—

"Australia is the only white country in the world where conscription has not been carried."

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: That is not true.

Mr. ROBERTS: I made a statement just now with regard to the marriages of Australian soldiers. I now have the "Brisbane Courier" of 22nd November, which refers to the matter. I find that Senator Pearce says—

"Reference was made to-day by the Minister for Defence to a statement that 10,000 Australian soldiers had married English girls in England. Senator Pearce said it was a gross exaggeration. As late as September 7, a cable message had been received from the A.I.F. Headquarters in London, stating that since the first expeditionary force left Australia not more than 1,800 Australian soldiers had married English girls."

I still say, therefore, that the statement I made earlier in my speech that there were not thousands of Australians who had married English girls was true—not that it would be any detriment to them if they had. Now, I have heard hon. members quote Lord Roberts on many occasions, and these are some of his remarks on the rights of a man to defend his country, as they appear in "The Argus" of 14th November—

"1. Is it consistent with the freedom and rights of a Briton that he should be legally liable to education and the payment of taxes?

"2. If so, how can it be urged that Britons would be deprived of either their rights or freedom should the nation, after full consideration, register its decision in the House of Commons, that every able-bodied man shall be liable to serve his country in an emergency, and be trained in youth to that end?

"3. Is it consistent with the dignity of a great nation that the mass of its inhabitants should pay in nothing but money for their defence?

"4. Is it creditable or fair that in times of storm and stress our best men should be sacrificed in defence of those who have not the courage or patriotism to defend themselves, their families, or their country?

"5. Is it consistent with a Briton's sense of honour that he should be unable to defend his home and his wife?

"6. What British woman can respect a man who is unable to defend her?

"7. If it be true that Britons have rights, is it not also true that they have duties?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is only for training.

Mr. ROBERTS: What would be the object of training but that they could be ready for active service? Reference has been made to that gallant band of English regulars who were sent to France early in the war. Did not they have the advantage of training? Was it not because those men were ready and fit for the fray that we held the Germans at that crisis?

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: They were not conscripts.

Mr. ROBERTS: I am not saying that they were conscripts. I regret that I have gone just a shade further than I intended. I did not want to make this a discussion on conscription. I wanted to set out that so far as I was concerned, I was of opinion that the censor should give a fair deal all round.

The PREMIER: Do you think it is a fair thing to prevent the remarks I read out being reported?

Mr. ROBERTS: I am inclined to say that many of them would have been better unsaid, considering the responsible position the hon. member holds, and I certainly think the censor was well within his rights in cutting out some of the statements which the Treasurer read out.

Mr. BAYLEY (Pittsworth): The Premier seems to have taken great umbrage at the fact that the speech he made recently was censored, and I will admit that it does seem difficult, perhaps, to tell why portions of that speech were censored as they were, but the fact remains that quite a number of the statements of the Premier should never have been made. Harmless as they might have been at ordinary times, we must remember that we live in extraordinary times, and what might be said under other conditions should not be said at the present juncture—when we are at death grips, when the well-being of the British Empire is at stake, and the nation is fighting for its very existence—I say that some of the remarks were unwise; they were unwarranted; and some of the statements which the Treasurer has quoted from those pamphlets were still more unwise, and still more unwarranted. The people of Queensland, and the trade unionists, are told that the aim and object of those who are interested in the conscription question is to wreck trade unionism in Australia. We are told that the object of Sir William Irvine and others is to introduce foreign labour—black, brown, and brindle—in order to carry on the work of the community; in order to enable the bloated capitalists they refer to to make bigger profits. In talk-

[11 p.m.] ing of trade unionism and trade unionists, all I can say is that I sincerely hope that the great bulk of trade unionists in Queensland are not in the same category, and do not hold the same opinions as were expressed by speakers at a large mass meeting of unionists in the Trades Hall one Sunday night during the last campaign. I was there. I had some difficulty in getting in, but I got in, and was sitting in the front row, within three yards of the speakers, and—

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more than that—two members on the Government side were there also, and saw me, and spoke to me.

The TREASURER: What were you doing there? Were you a spy?

Mr. BAYLEY: I was not a spy. It was a public meeting, and I had great difficulty in getting in, but I got in. If the sentiments expressed by that gathering of unionists in the Trades Hall on that occasion represent the views of the trade unionists of Queensland, it is a sorry day for Queensland and the Empire.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: You are not game to make a straight-out charge.

Mr. BAYLEY: I will tell you exactly what I heard there.

The TREASURER: You were a spy.

Mr. BAYLEY: I was not a spy. One of the most prominent workers in the socialist cause, who was on the platform, made this statement—I can swear to it almost word for word. He said—

“We hear a good deal about the men who have gone to the front. We hear a good deal in praise of ‘the boys in khaki who are fighting and dying for the Empire.’ We hear them called ‘the cream’ of Australia. I have another name for them; I would call them ‘the scum’ of Australia.”

That is not the worst feature. When the speaker made the remark that they were the scum of Australia, almost every man and woman in that hall cheered or applauded.

The PREMIER: Who do you think will believe that?

Mr. BAYLEY: I can prove it. I jumped to my feet, and said, “Fancy those brave boys dying for a thing like you”; and there were numerous cries of “Chuck him out.” Another speaker made this remark, “Young men, save yourselves while there is time.” What do they care about the Empire—the women, the wives, and the daughters of Australia?

The PREMIER: What is the name of the man who said this?

Mr. BAYLEY: I do not like to be personal, but if you require the name I will give it to you afterwards. (Government laughter.)

The TREASURER: Give it to us now, if you dare.

Mr. BAYLEY: I will give it to you—it is Mr. Joseph Silver Collings. (Government laughter.) There were several other speakers who gave utterance to similar expressions. I jumped to my feet, and said, “Good heavens! Am I in Brisbane or Berlin?” They cried, “Chuck him out; kick him out; throw him down the back steps.” One of the hon. members supporting the Government, who was present at the meeting, remarked afterwards to me, “I would not have been in your shoes for £1,000; I thought they would have broken your head before they had finished with you. I am only mentioning this to show what we have to meet with in trade union circles in Brisbane.” These are not ordinary times, and the Federal Government have a “hard row to hoe.” It is up to each one of us to get behind the Federal Government, to put aside our prejudices and do all we can to help the Government in this time of need.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Are you in favour of conscription?

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Mr. BAYLEY: You used to be. Not long ago the Minister for Railways said he was in favour of conscription, and he knows it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I rise to a point of order. I absolutely deny that I was. It is a deliberate untruth, and I ask that the hon. member withdraw that statement.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member must accept the denial of the Minister.

Mr. BAYLEY: I would not contradict what the hon. gentleman says, but I was certainly informed on very good authority that he did say it. (Government laughter.)

The SPEAKER: Order! I would suggest to the hon. member that he should refrain from making charges on the information of someone who told him, when he does not know whether they are true or not.

Mr. BAYLEY: I have withdrawn the remark, although I have very good reason for using it. We are told that conscription is not democratic. We find that throughout Queensland and other parts of Australia some families are giving all. In some families with only one son the lad has gone; in some families with three, four, or five, or half a dozen sons, they have all gone. I know one family of seven—six boys and one daughter. The six boys have gone to the front; the daughter is married, and her husband has gone. The mother and daughter are living at home, and their seven loved ones are away fighting for the Empire. This is an instance of what we find in Queensland and throughout Australia. There are numbers of families who have given up all they possess, while many other families have four, five, and six big lumps of sons, well able to go, but not one has gone. Is this democratic? Does one hon. member opposite say that this is democratic? No, indeed. We believe in equality of sacrifice as well as equality in enjoying the fruits of our liberty. We are told that it is not moral—that it is absolutely immoral—for men to be forced to go to the front to fight and imperil their lives. Is it more immoral that men should be forced to go to the front, if they will not go, and are able to go, in order to defend their country and their loved ones; or is it more immoral that the women folk and children of Australia be allowed to be attacked, outraged, and perhaps killed, by the foe? Which is more immoral?

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: The Kaiser's rule of force you are advocating.

Mr. BAYLEY: The only way to meet force is by force. They tell us so glibly that it is not a moral thing to force a man to defend his country if he is not willing to go. Is it more moral to allow the woman and children of this country to be placed at the mercy of men who would treat them in the shameful way they have treated the women and children of Belgium and other countries?

Mr. COLLINS: You are going to bring Chinese in.

Mr. BAYLEY: The hon. member who interjects knows that suggestion is an absolute untruth. The hon. member objected very strenuously to being called a pro-German, and rightly so, but while he objects to such epithets being hurled across the Chamber at his side of the House, he and others think they have a perfect right to make all sorts of spurious charges against members on this side of the House, and that

we should not reply to those charges. If they object to being called pro-Germans, they should have the decency not to make such wild and unfounded charges against members on this side of the House. But the hour is late, and I think the matter has been thrashed out fairly well, and I shall conclude by saying that I hope the good sense of the House will lead the majority of members to support the amendment proposed by the leader of the Opposition.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted (*Mr. Tolmie's amendment*) stand part of the question—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 34.

Mr. Armfield	Mr. Jones
" Barber	" Land
" Bertram	" May
" Carter	" McLachlan
" Collins	" McPhail
" Coyne	" O'Sullivan
" Dunstan	" Payne
" Fihelly	" Peterson
" Foley	" Ryan, D.
" Forde	" Ryan, H. J.
" Gilday	" Ryan, T. J.
" Gillies	" Smith
" Hardacre	" Stopford
" Hartley H. L.	" Theodore
" Hartley, W.	" Wellington
" Hunter	" Wilson
" Huxham	" Winstanley

Tellers: Mr. Dunstan and Mr. McPhail.

NOES, 18.

Mr. Armstrong	Mr. Macartney
" Barnes	" Moore
" Bayley	" Morgan
" Bebbington	" Petrie
" Bell	" Roberts
" Bridges	" Stodart
" Corser	" Swayne
" Grayson	" Tolmie
" Gunn	" Vowles

Tellers: Mr. Bell and Mr. Corser.

PAIR.

Aye—Mr. Free. No—Mr. Appel.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Original question put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 34.

Mr. Armfield	Mr. Jones
" Barber	" Land
" Bertram	" May
" Carter	" McLachlan
" Collins	" McPhail
" Coyne	" O'Sullivan
" Dunstan	" Payne
" Fihelly	" Peterson
" Foley	" Ryan, D.
" Forde	" Ryan, H. J.
" Gilday	" Ryan, T. J.
" Gillies	" Smith
" Hardacre	" Stopford
" Hartley, H. L.	" Theodore
" Hartley, W.	" Wellington
" Hunter	" Wilson
" Huxham	" Winstanley

Tellers: Mr. Forde and Mr. H. L. Hartley.

NOES, 17.

Mr. Armstrong	Mr. Moore
" Barnes	" Morgan
" Bayley	" Petrie
" Bebbington	" Roberts
" Bell	" Stodart
" Bridges	" Swayne
" Corser	" Tolmie
" Grayson	" Vowles
" Macartney	

Tellers: Mr. Bayley and Mr. Morgan.

PAIR.

Aye—Mr. Free. No—Mr. Appel.

Resolved in the affirmative.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—That this House do now adjourn. The business to-morrow will be Supply. We will take the balance of the Treasury Estimates and the Estimates of the Lands and Education Departments. If we get through that, we may go home. That will be followed by the Mount Molloy railway proposal, and the rest of the business as it appears on the business-sheet.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at twenty-five minutes past 11 o'clock.

By Authority. ANTHONY JAMES CUMMING, Government Printer, Brisbane.

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LEGISLATURE OF QUEENSLAND.

1917—THIRD SESSION.

THE GOVERNOR.

His Excellency Sir HAMILTON JOHN GOOLD-ADAMS, G.C.M.G., C.B.

THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR.

* * * * *

THE MINISTRY.

With Seats in the Legislative Assembly.

Vice-President of Executive Council, Chief Secretary, and Attorney-General—The Honourable THOMAS JOSEPH RYAN.

The Treasurer and Secretary for Public Works—The Honourable EDWARD GRANVILLE THEODORE.

The Home Secretary—The Honourable JOHN HUXHAM.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—The Honourable WILLIAM LENNON.

The Secretary for Public Lands—The Honourable JOHN McEWAN HUNTER.

The Secretary for Railways—The Honourable JOHN HARRY COXNE.

The Secretary for Public Instruction—The Honourable HERBERT FREEMONT HARDACRE.

Minister without Portfolio—The Honourable JOHN ARTHUR FHELLY.

With Seat in the Legislative Council.

The Secretary for Mines—The Honourable ALFRED JAMES JONES.

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	{	Honourable EDWIN WESLEY HOWARD FOWLES
	{	Honourable PATRICK JAMES LEAHY
	{	Honourable WILLIAM STEPHENS

BEDFORD, Honourable RANDOLPH

BEIRNE, Honourable THOMAS CHARLES.

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CAMPBELL, Honourable CHARLES.

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HARTLEY, WILLIAM, Esquire (*Kurilpa*).

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